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THE ETCHINGHAM LETTERS.¹

BY MRS. FULLER MAITLAND AND SIR FREDERICK
POLLOCK, BART.

XLV.

*From Miss Elizabeth Etchingham, 83 Hans Place,
to Sir Richard Etchingham, Tolcarne.*

'DEAR AND RESPECTABLE SIR,'—Thank you very much for the letter, the copy of Sir John Davis's poems, and the stack of rosemary just received—

(' Up and down and everywhere
I strew the herbs to purge the air ').

Your binder, Richard, has mended Sir John Davis's back perfectly. I will appoint him spinal instrument maker-in-ordinary to my old authors. I like my present and I like the verse you wrote on the flyleaf. To whose garden of poetry did you go to gather it? (Don't forget to tell me this.) And my birthday has brought me other desirable possessions. Mrs. Vivian, whom we should all think as kind as she really is, did she not tell us to the contrary, sent me by the hand of Minnie an old Psalm Book—the white silk cover embroidered in silver and coloured threads by the Nuns of Little Gidding. And Charles presented me with an efficacious umbrella, which confirms my opinion that character shows itself in gifts. (Charles brought his son when he last visited us, and little Harry clamoured to be taken home on the *ceiling* of the omnibus.) Mrs. Vivian turns homeward from Marienbad almost immediately. She tells me that Ada Llanelly is now 'glueing

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herself to that horrible Mrs. Potters, who has turned up here and means to winter in Egypt, and Lady Clementine's dread that Ada intends to marry her boy, who will be at Cairo too, has increased to panic point. But she surely would find your brother Harry less tiresome. George Mure may be clever, but for choice I prefer the cleverness that doesn't make everyone brought in contact with it feel qualified for Earlswood.' Lady Clementine has given up Christian Science. Her son-in-law, according to Mrs. Vivian, informed her in harsh positive tones that it was 'all rubbish,' and the poor woman's state is again—'to what God shall we now offer up our sacrifice?'

That Harry does not go to the front is, to a craven like myself, most excellent news. He wrote to Cynthia after receiving the tidings of the Pampesford engagement. He wrote, and wrote in that mystic diction that expresses less than is by it understood. It amused me to find that Harry—guileless Harry—knew in advance of 'semper Augustus's' invasion of Scotland, and kept his own counsel, which is yet another instance of the secretive effect of falling in love. Cynthia showed me his letter not very long after she received it. And she answered it, and I do not believe that there were as many words in the epistle as it took minutes to write them. Then she went on posting errand herself. I wish second sight could have enabled Harry to see his postwoman escorting her letter the first stage of the way. When all of a sudden no member of a household, no proven friend, well-loved relation, faithful servant, is to be trusted to post a letter, the letter-writer is perhaps rather far gone through the faëry land of Romance.

The confession of Harry's devotion took Cynthia by surprise, but as soon as the shock of the surprise had passed she realised, I think, how much he was to her. She accepted us all, you see, as relations; and had this been otherwise, Harry's demeanour has misled less unsophisticated beings. That half-chaffing, half-sollicitous, and wholly courteous manner of his may mean everything or nothing. If she was slow to know her own mind, I myself am disposed to sympathise with the mind slow in such recognition. She is a dear, good child, and I think we may feel quite happy and content now about her and about Harry, for, soon or syne, Ada Llanelly at Cairo or not at Cairo, all I believe will be well.

Did I tell you that Mrs. Carstairs has lent Laura her house at

Wimbledon, and it is to be our headquarters till the day that turns our stepmother into a Pampesford? (Laurel Lawn, Wimbledon, is the address.) Mr. Weekes has been found—at Worthing. Worthing somehow seems to befit Mr. Weekes as environment. Sir Augustus is most attentive. Laura beams and bridles. It is all quite delightful and studded with diamonds and ushered in on massive gold plate.

We dined with the Pampesford family last night. The house, as Harry said of Mrs. Potters' house, reeks of money. And though the contents, taken separately, are really above reproach, yet the whole effect is not beautiful in the least, but boastful and nothing more. I came away convinced that even Corots and Millets can be vulgarised by the machinations of frame-makers and paper-hangers, and that old Italian cabinets and old Persian prayer-rugs can be overdone up and overdone till they speak of nothing but bank-notes. The very flowers—poor dears, what a shame!—looked purse-proud. I came home, determined that when my room next needs decorating, it shall be decorated *à la* cell. There is no 'moss' in that Palace Gardens house, and no refining touch of utility. I would give its plenishings from roof to basement for the contents of my mother's sitting-room at Tolcarne. (I hope Mrs. Enticknap attended to instructions and re-arranged everything there after we came away as it was before Laura's reign.) Dreams have a trick of reverting to the past for their background, and I dream of that room sometimes now, and think I see the David Cox water-colours, the delft china, the old lacquer cabinet, in which the mother-of-pearl fish counter lived with which we used to play at commerce, the tortoise-shell workbox, the oval hand-screens upon the chimney-piece with their faint embroidery of faded flowers—but I need not write an inventory of that upper chamber in your very own house. Don't you like an upstairs country sitting-room where the windows are on a level with the heart of a tree? Especially when the tree is a cedar-tree, and the windows give upon the west, and the sunset is to be seen framed by the great level cedar-boughs? And when the windows of a room are on a level with the heart of a tree, the birds come so delightfully near. I trust that the jays have not been improved away from the Wellington College fir-woods? The flash of blue wings used to spangle those shades as with gleams of blue fire.

Back to our Pampesford dinner after this country excursion I go. The company was just what we might have expected

Apathetic or restlessly ill-at-ease women 'stuck o'er,' not 'with yew' but, diamonds. Men who looked—what did they look? I don't know. What I do know is that, from these persons, Cynthia and Stephen in appearance and manner seemed as far removed as do the etchings of M. Helleu from Gustave Doré's oil paintings, or as the 'Voyage autour de ma Chambre' does from the 'Dampshire Times's' full report of the wedding gifts to a local bride and bridegroom. The heat was asphyxiating. I sat nerving myself to see the scarlet, choleric-looking gentlemen on either side of me fall insensible into their priceless china plates. The dinner was abnormally long. There was far too much dinner—there was far too much of everything that money brings.

But never you trouble, dear, to describe feminine attire to me again. You said that the Miss Pampesfords' apparel, even to your eyes, looked antique. Antique. No, Dickory. They go clad in the latest fashion. The colouring sombre certainly, as becomes the wearers' age, but you will be calling Mrs. Vivian *démodée* next. My old black rags and Cynthia's new white frock were nowhere beside our hostesses' splendour, and the gown that Blake terms 'her ladyship's best ruby' was also quite cowed by the splendid trappings of Laura's future sisters-in-law. The Miss Pampesfords' minds may be dowdy, but their raiment, believe me, is not.

It must be fear of mankind, I think, that frightens the old ladies into the paroxysms of perturbed silence that you described. They talked quite freely the other evening; not during dinner certainly, nor did it seem to occur to the various editions of Dives present that their hostesses were there to be spoken to. Stephen made valiant attempts to storm the citadel of Miss Teresa's dumb embarrassment, but sank back in his chair with a look of profoundest depression and mental exhaustion about the period of the fish. After dinner, however, there was a buzz of talk. Laura told everybody what she could digest, or rather what she could not. ('*Je ne digère pas bien*' is nowadays a well-worn theme.) And Miss Pampesford recommended digestive biscuits, and Miss Teresa recommended digestive—I forget what. It was eleven o'clock before poor Stephen and the rest of the company 'joined us,' and as Laura wished to go on somewhere we had not to wait long for the order of release.

Elsenham Market Hall, Suffolk: Sunday.

Alice needed an excuse for the warding off of Mrs. Ware, and so sent for me, and I kept my letter back to give you news of her.

Mrs. Ware is one of those gruesomely disposed persons who insist upon the etiquette and pomp of woe. Do you remember Harry's story of the resentment of his servant's widow, because the poor man's funeral paraphernalia did not include 'plumes'?—'I did, sir, count upon plumes.' Mrs. Ware counts upon plumes, and comes periodically to see if Alice is mourning in orthodox fashion and if the crape is deep as can be upon both her skirt and her soul. I prefer 'soldiers' sadness' to plumes:—

'What his funerals lacked
In images and pomp they had supplied
With honourable sorrow, soldiers' sadness,
A kind of silent mourning, such as men
Who know no tears, but from their captives', use
To shew in so great losses.'

You will be glad to hear that Alice is in rather better case than I had gathered from former reports, and Mr. Shipley, who, by the way, says his work will take him to Winchester next week—thinks, too, that she has turned the corner. She does not seem quite as restless or look quite as overdriven as she did. This is peaceful, pleasant enough country—the country that Constable painted—and the Stour threads the meadows through which this morning we walked to church. I would give the languid Stour from start to finish for a span of the least Highland burn that splashes the heather, but Alice likes this country, and the country cottage people like her.

I hope and believe that her life will fill itself with wholesome interests, and that she may recover as much tranquillity, if not happiness, as has to serve for many another. She is unselfish, and so, when not harassed and fretted almost beyond endurance, she will find pleasure in the well-being of others. I don't say that she will not pauperise the village, but there are infirm aged folk and ailing babies whose moral fibre will not be permanently injured by a rather over-lavish distribution of supplies. Poor Colonel Newton was for ever denouncing 'useless vagabonds' and 'able-bodied beggars who would not work.' Very likely there was some truth in his indictment; but we may perhaps hope that we are not doing much harm by smoothing the last stretch of the way for the old and feeble, and trying to make pain less for a sick or crippled child.

Alice is full of dreamy fancies, always. She would not be Alice if she were not. But her fancies bring hope and comfort to her, and why they should excite Mrs. Ware's disapproval and

suspicion I don't know. 'Have you ever noticed,' she said to me just now, 'that when the birds spread their wings to fly they make the sign of the cross?'

The post goes early to-day, so good-bye.

ELIZABETH.

N.B.—'I' ya longtemps que je t'aime,
Jamais je t'oublierai.'

XLVI.

From Sir Richard Etchingham, Tolcarne, to Miss Elizabeth Etchingham, Laurel Lawn, Wimbledon.

MY DEAR ELIZABETH,—Our only positive news is that Arthur is home for the holidays (having missed you in London by your excursion into Suffolk); and the Folletts expect Shipley for a short visit. Those charters, or whatever they are, at Thursborough seem not to be exhausted. Mrs. Ware and her kind, who love the pomp of woe, have an ancestry so respectable and so widely spread that one almost thinks their frame of mind must be the real primitive human nature. It flourishes in the West country, as witness the dialogue between a groom and his uncle, overheard in a Devonshire stable, and recorded among the sayings of Mr. Hicks of Bodmin:

'Well, Jem, you didn't come to Betsey's burying?'

'No, Uncle, I couldn't get away.'

'Ah, you'd 've enjied yourself. We had dree quarts of gin, one quart of brandy, and one quart of rum, roast beef, and viggys pudden.'

Then a sighing eulogium on the 'poor, dear, patient creature,' followed after a pause by the matter-of-fact information that 'her lied screeching vower hours afore her died.' Such dialogues need Sir Thomas Browne for a commentator, to show us that there is no real break between the humours and the solemnity of life. Heine would have done even better perhaps, if he had not been disqualified by invincible ignorance of English character. Why is it that even the cleverest and most painstaking Continental writers are apt to make at least one grotesque blunder when they write about England? Of course, our half-educated public make quite as absurd ones about French, German, and American, not to mention Anglo-Indian matters; but not our best people, I think. Taine, I have been told, was really accurate, and the younger Frenchmen of his school are following suit; for Darne-

steter—a scholar of quite original genius—I think I can answer. But Jem won't admit that any foreigner has ever touched English Universities with impunity.

The name of Darmesteter reminds me—you will see why directly—of the verses I copied on Sir John Davis's fly-leaf. I thought you would hardly guess whose they were.

'For in my Soul a temple have I made,
Set on a height, divine, and steep and far;
Nor often may I hope those floors to tread,
Or reach the gates that glimmer like a star.'

There is an old-world flavour about them, but they are very modern indeed—Madame James Darmesteter's. Her verse has to me more of the real singing quality in it than can be found in almost any of our living poets junior to Mr. Swinburne, save one—and that one is a woman, too, so there is another guess for you. The thought exactly marks the difference of the nineteenth from the seventeenth century. Our speculation has travelled wider, and learnt not despair, as some impatient folk would have it, but patience and modesty, and the renunciation of expecting precise and formal agreement even from our dearest friends.

Margaret and I have been watching the education of Songstress's puppies with deep interest and occasional controversy. Margaret believes that puppies and kittens are very clever and remember all sorts of things, which I don't. But we agree that there is nothing more fascinating to see than a young creature, dog or cat, playing with an older one. Those who have observed this know that there is nothing new in the modern tyranny of children over their parents. It is curious, too, to see how, with plentiful display of teeth and claws, they manage never to hurt one another. Enticknap has three kittens at his cottage, of whom we call one Joab, as being 'him that first getteth up to the gutter'—he did it at quite an early age by judicious use of a creeper; the gutter of the tool-house in the garden I mean. So he is 'the agile Joab,' as Margaret finds it written in a silly book of Scripture history that Laura gave her once with a view of doing her good. The other two are Sampson and Filipina ('the connection of which with the plot one sees'). Filipina seems of a lively disposition enough, but Sampson is at present very proud and shy. People used to talk as if character depended merely on education; and yet, if they had kept their eyes open, they could have seen the most marked differences in character between puppies and kittens of the same

litter at a few weeks old. Which is also rather bad for astrology, as they must have pretty much the same horoscope ; but no doubt an astrologer would be ready, like all professors of pseudo-sciences, to patch the breach of his fictitious rule by finding an equally fictitious exception. When you have once begun the business of complicated fallacy, 'cycle on epicycle,' one fiction more costs nothing. Joab has climbed in at the study window and is trying to eat the feather end of my pen while I am writing. I don't think he is laid out for a house cat. No, Joab, I am not the Philistines or the children of Ammon that you should scratch me, and your manners have not that repose which elderly persons desire in a domestic companion. I love cats, but a restless cat gets on one's nerves. I shall go to the stable and talk to the snub-nosed puppies ; they are rather soothing. Cats have more roving and miscellaneous curiosity than dogs ; a dog begins to get a working notion of what concerns him and what not almost as soon as he finds out anything ; and then he proceeds to leave a lot of things alone. A cat is not satisfied till he has accounted for everything in the room. In other words, the cat might say, you mean that the dog is a business man, a tradesman, a pursuer of the main chance, and I am a philosopher ? That is so.—But the cat would be a sophist, or else (as he is likely to be) incapable of seeing the point that the dog has attained the state of a sociable animal, which very few cats do, though I have known it in some. It is harder to appreciate cats than dogs, because you want so much more detachment ; in fact, you have all the way to go to the cat, while the dog comes half-way to meet man. But it does not follow that the cat is the nobler animal. More interesting as a study in some ways, perhaps. Arthur calls me to the puppies. He is at the age that distinctly prefers dogs.

—I have been turning over Cobbett's 'Rural Rides,' a book I had not looked at for many years—indeed I had all but forgotten its existence. Cobbett is delightful, not only for his racy down-right English and love of the country (as country, not as a collection of subjects for pictures), but for the perpetual paradox of his being what he is. He was a Tory by nature, if ever there was one, hating cities, standing armies, foreign trees, free trade, paper money, and Dissenters, especially Unitarians. And yet he became famous as a Radical. If he had come a generation or two later, he would have been a pioneer, or at least a pillar, of the new Toryism. The wretched Unitarians get the choicest vials of his

wrath, like this outpouring when he rides past the Devil's Jumps on the way from Selborne to Thursley: 'The Unitarians will not believe in the Trinity because they cannot account for it. Will they come here to Churt, go and look at these Devil's Jumps, and account to me for the placing of those three hills, in the shape of three rather squat sugar-loaves, along in a line upon this heath, or the placing of a rock-stone upon the top of one of them as big as a church tower?' And again, where he says—after mentioning the conversion or perversion of his old friend, Baron Maseres, to Unitarianism—'I do most heartily despise this priggish set for their conceit and impudence'—and proceeds to pose them with a series of questions in natural history, most of them absurd and founded on vulgar errors, though Cobbett boldly says that the facts are all notoriously true. The middle one of the seven questions—'What causes horse-hair to become living things?'—is a fair specimen.

Next to Unitarians, Cobbett hated Scotch fir and barren common lands. Hind Head, which is now frequented for its wild beauty, is for Cobbett 'certainly the most villanous spot that God ever made.' It is another question whether the increase of building, villas, boarding-houses, convalescent homes, and what not, will not soon cause Hind Head and several other formerly secluded places to vie with one another for being the most villanous blot on fair country that man ever made. But this would be nothing to Cobbett. Perhaps he was the last of the writers on rustic matters who frankly made no pretence to an eye for the picturesque. He could admire a smiling landscape, but a soil where crops would not grow was in his vocabulary ugly, nasty, 'spewy,' or blackguard.

And so no more at present from your loving brother,

RICHARD.

XLVII.

*From Miss Elizabeth Etchingham, Laurel Lawn, Wimbledon,
to Sir Richard Etchingham, Tolcarne.*

DEAREST DICKORY,—Some folk seem incorrigible. *I will* not be told by post to guess. How irritating you are. How weak-minded I am. Had I any real strength of character, I should sweep your provoking conundrums out of my mind and have done with them; but as, demon, I weakly desire to know your opinion about everything, I let your guessing orders disturb me.

I went out to buy a Tennyson to enable me to come to a conclusion when you last bade me guess, but I am not at this hour going out to buy the works of all the modern women poets. Their name is legion. I can't gather

'into quires
The scattered nightingales.'

It would need every van with Carter Paterson's name upon it to bring the quires here, and I should be taken up by the police for obstruction, doubtless, did I attempt the task.

The women poets with whom I am intimate are the women who lived on the other and more romantic side of the border; and they are long dead and gone. (I rather think I like my verse, as I like my china, old.) Jane Elliot, Lady Anne Lindsey, Lady Wardlaw, Lady Nairne. I don't know that women now can write as they did, but then I know little about it. I have, however, an acquaintance among the latter-day Philomels, and she wrote this:

'Time brought me many another friend
That loved me longer,
New love was kind, but in the end
Old love was stronger.
Years come and go. No New Year yet
Hath slain December,
And all that should have cried, Forget!
Cries but—Remember!'

I like the song. I like the sentiment. But it was not my intention to quote verse to-day or to look through that cypress and rosemary bordered avenue backward:

'Tis not the air I wished to play,
The strain I wished to sing;
My wilful spirit slipped away
And struck another string.'

I meant to reprove you for ruffling a temper, smooth, till you touched it, as an angel's wing, and then to pass on to Pampesford and present affairs. You would have scoffed to see the folding of your sister to the heart of Miss Pampesford and Miss Teresa Pampesford yesterday. This is how the folding to the heart befel. While Laura was undergoing the process known as 'being fitted' (she really must be as strong as a horse, as she goes to London and back nearly every day through this overwhelming heat), I thought I would do a politeness and call upon the Miss Pampesfords, who had repeatedly begged me to 'come in and have tea informally.' I found them alone and apparently unoccupied, the nearest approach to occupa-

tion being the 'Times,' 'Morning Post,' and 'Illustrated London News' neatly folded and lying upon a console—I suppose you would call the marble-and-gilt splendour. I tried them with various subjects and strove to discover what really is their 'shop,' that I might get them to talk it. Their brother is their 'shop.' I sympathise with the folk who have a long-standing craze for another human creature, particularly if the other human creature is not of the same sex as the crazed—(don't betray this sentiment to Laura or Mrs. Carstairs)—and there is something pathetic in their idolisation of 'Augustus.' After a while I began to think that I quite admired him too.

'I don't know if we ought to say it to you,' Miss Pampesford said at last, growing more and more confidential; 'but you seem to feel kindly, and you have brothers yourself, and so perhaps we should not be misunderstood if we tell you that our thankfulness in the prospect of Augustus' happiness is intensified by the fact that for many years we feared that happiness would never be his again.' 'Yes,' poor old Miss Teresa said, wiping her eyes with a magnificently laced handkerchief, 'we feared that happiness would never be his again.' 'In the prime of youth,' Miss Pampesford went on, 'he became attached to and married a very sweet young thing. She had no fortune and no high-born connections (she was a governess, my dear Miss Etchingham), she had just the fortune of a sweet, grateful, lovable nature, and a most lovely face.' 'Yes,' Miss Teresa repeated, 'a sweet, grateful, lovable nature, and a most lovely face.' 'She died, my dear Miss Etchingham, she and the dear little baby, on the first anniversary of her wedding day.' Poor Miss Pampesford tried to speak on, but her voice for a moment or two left her. 'Our brother,' she continued after what seemed a long pause, 'was a changed man. He would sit by the hour silent and abstracted, scarcely answering when addressed. It is very hard, my dear Miss Etchingham, to be able to do nothing to lessen the suffering of those one loves.' (It is. Do you know anything very much harder? I don't.)

They have hearts, Richard, and when grim old dragons, even, have hearts, I like them. I hope Laura won't trample them to death.

I conveyed Azore yesterday to Prince's Gardens that he might there be re-united to Mrs. Vivian as she passed through London on her way from Marienbad to Vivian-End. ('My saint looks well,' she admitted.) She has been advising Lady Clementine Mure, 'who

travelled home with us, looking, Elizabeth, as we crossed, for all the world like *un mouton qui rêve*, either to marry Admiral Tidenham or go round the world: Admiral Tidenham, being deaf as a post, is cut out to have a silly wife who talks incessantly about nothing, as he won't hear a word she says. 'You,' she told me, 'are still too young for marriage, or globe-trotting, as the fashion now is. Wait till you are fifty.' But a third alternative presents itself to Lady Clementine. On board the Channel boat she was the thankful witness of Ada Llanelly's and Mr. Biggleswade's cordial relations. (He was on his way back from Paris. 'London,' he says, 'is too suburban for me, I admit.' You know, I suppose, that he has come into a big fortune?) 'Ada,' Mrs. Vivian tells me, 'forsook all others, including George Mure, and cleaved to Mr. Biggleswade from Calais to Charing Cross.' Furthermore, the next morning's post brought a letter from him announcing his intention of leaving the Church, 'as literary engagements and the duties of a landed proprietor,' &c. &c. Vivian-End living is in Mr. Vivian's gift, and there is a very excellent High Church, Alick Mure (Lady Clementine's youngest son) now half killing himself and destroying his delicate lungs with curate's overwork in the South London parish to which Mrs. Vivian plays Lady Bountiful. Alick Mure will go to that delightful rose-and-jasmine embowered Vivian-End vicarage, and poor rudderless Lady Clementine can make her home with him. He is the only one of her family who has never bullied or been rude to her. She will of course become High Church too, and embroider stoles and altar-hangings in peaceful precincts for the rest of her natural life. So that's all right.

Commend me to your dogs and cats, your kittens and puppies. (You have not said a word lately of Tracy.) Dogs I consider the most lovable, cats the most fascinating, of animals. To fall beneath the fascination of a cat, especially of a Persian cat, endowed both with the languor and the fire of the East, is to be under a spell. Friendship with a dog means the finding of a dear, perfect, sympathetic, faithful friend. I don't know that a cat's fidelity is to be trusted. When Azore ailed slightly the other day (he had taken to himself a ham from the sideboard), I sent for his doctor, who gave me various instances of the gratitude of dogs as patients. I then inquired about horses as patients. 'Horses have no way to demonstrate, you see,' he said. 'And cats?' I asked. The expression of Azore's medical attendant

changed from mild philanthropy to long pent-up indignation. 'Cats!' he exclaimed with heat—'I don't get any gratitude from cats.' But this perhaps is an exceptional experience.

Treat kindly the little knot of white heather that I enclose. Some heather and bog-myrtle came just now from Dalruogh. A day or two ago dear Mr. Fraser sent us grouse, and then the story of my erratic conduct in going off to Dalruogh alone was related to Sir Augustus. 'Augustus asked me if it is not unusual for ladies to pay afternoon visits at houses where there is no hostess,' Laura told me afterwards. Oh dear, oh dear, the imbecility, and worse than imbecility, of this sort of thing! Should men and women be buried in the same churchyard, do you think? Mrs. Le Marchant and Mrs. Carstairs would say No. Mrs. Carstairs, if I may be forgiven for thinking so while living, though not as her guest, under her roof, is the type of woman that I trust evolution will rid us of shortly. She is an adept in sinister insinuation and in unpleasant interpretation of innocent acts. The world, according to her, is made up of jealous wives and hoodwinked husbands, or the other way round. The folly or falsehood of insisting that such cases are the rule, not the exception, surprises me anew whenever I am confronted by the point of view. But it is not worth being angry with, though it does sometimes anger me. And then I think that the women whose thoughts run in such grooves are mostly objects for compassion. Unloved and unlovable, they wither for want of the sunshine of wholesome human affection. Mrs. Vivian's tirades are of a wholly different nature. Her tongue may be sharp, and she may indulge over-freely in feline amenities, but adder's poison is not under her lips, and her nature has no trace of the ugly twist that makes Mrs. Carstairs my *bête noire*. Why cannot we in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand think of and treat human beings as our fellow-creatures, not in that stupid uncomfortable way of—I am a woman and you are a man? I never had any patience with it.

Farewell, Dickory, I have known worse folk than you.

ELIZABETH.

XLVIII.

From Sir Richard Etchingham, Tolcarne, to Miss Elizabeth Etchingham, Laurel Lawn, Wimbledon.

MY DEAR ELIZABETH,—There is news for you this time. You

are to keep your Christmas at Tolcarne and not go away again. No refusal this time. For if Elizabeth will not come and reign with Richard at Tolcarne, there will be nothing left for Richard but to get up a lawsuit with Mrs. Tallis to occupy his declining years, and steal her housekeeper as an episode. Marry, how? Shipley is at the vicarage, and we went there to afternoon tea; and Mr. Follett was full of Anglo-Saxon antiquities, and in great indignation with somebody who had been vamping up some of the old nonsense about King Alfred—the fable of his hanging forty odd unjust judges, I think it was; and Shipley was too busy to go out with Arthur, and yet he did not stay with us to talk of King Alfred; and Mrs. Follett was engaged with her gardener over the fowls. Her game-fowls are a fine breed. They want a great deal of attention when certain visitors are seen approaching—and at other times. And so, when the Vicar and I went out into his quercus walk, and he was showing me how the trees had come on this summer, who should meet us but Margaret and Shipley hand in hand, and she was looking—well, not as she looked after a certain interview with Mr. Weekes, of Worthing that is and of Pampesford Royal that is to be. They had settled something that was more to him than Alfred and Edward and all their charters. And the Vicar beamed, and I—never mind exactly what I did.

But this morning I took out the two seals you know, which for years I had looked at only once a year, those that my dear old Munshi got engraved after the writing of a cunning scribe at Agra. Mine—the one that reads ‘I said *Alif*’—is to be Shipley’s, and Maggie’s, inscribed ‘My soul said, *Say no more*,’ is for Margaret. They are to have them on the wedding-day. You remember the interpretation of the lines those words come from?

I said *Alif*: my soul said, *Say no more*: If One is in the house, one letter is enough.

Margaret will tell you more.

Yours in joy,

RICHARD.

XLIX.

*From Miss Elizabeth Etchingham, Laurel Lawn, Wimbledon,
to Sir Richard Etchingham, Tolcarne.*

DEAREST DICKORY,—You are the most unselfish creature in the world (I may have mentioned this before, as it is a conclusion I came to as soon as I could come to conclusions). I have a very

happy note from dear Margaret, too, but she thinks much more of you than you do of yourself, and 'leaving father' is already a cloud on her horizon. You have won her affections, as I knew you would, during the short time you have been together. I am thinking of Maggie now, and thinking that she would be glad (she and I always agreed about people). She would have liked and believed in 'Will' Shipley; and she would have wished Margaret to marry. She was far too happy with you not to consider marriage was the happiest destiny for a woman. And I think he is a good man, upright and 'trustie;' and then he is quick-witted on the surface and will not, for want of intuition, hurt his wife. I have often admired the tact and self-control with which he handled the many entanglements of the Newton household. To succeed in being everything to Alice, while for her sake remaining on good terms with Colonel Newton, was a great diplomatic achievement. The marriage will delight Alice; and Arthur will not withhold his consent.

No refusal from me this time, you say. No. Don't flatter yourself that you could keep me at a distance if you tried. I am coming, and coming to stay.

I remember about the seals, and what you tell me now made me go rather blind for a minute. In a way I want the child and her 'man' to have them, but I want you to keep them too, and I think I want you to keep them most. Have others made. Do not give up those till you are where you will not need seals, dear. But perhaps I am wrong. As I have no children, perhaps I cannot realise that what a parent gives to a child a parent keeps.

Laura's reception of the news would have amused you. Being Laura, she does not quite like honours to be divided, and would have preferred one engagement at a time in the family. Still she is benevolently inclined to Margaret, and 'enters into Margaret's feelings as only those can who know what it is.' 'You, Elizabeth,' she told me, 'as I have often heard people say, live in books; which, perhaps, is fortunate, as you don't seem to attract. But I have always found my happiness in my affections, and Margaret is, I think, like me.' One of Margaret's most valuable presents will be 'from Sir Augustus and Lady Pampesford,' and Laura's feelings for her are sisterly and emotional to the verge of tears, and not step-grandmotherly at all. I shall see you and my dear Margaret soon, if bulwarks of wedding presents and wedding garments allow me to see anyone. Don't indulge in 'a recurrence of your old attacks,' and so escape the ceremony. You must see Laura

become a Pampesford. 'It is expected of you.' We return to Hans Place next week.

Your loving sister,

ELIZABETH.

P.S.—Keep the seals. I can't bear you not to have them. I can't bear it for you or for Maggie. I think, if she knew, she would rather they were yours, only, still. I know she would. *Keep them, please.*

L.

From Sir Richard Etchingham, Tolcarne, to Miss Elizabeth Etchingham, 83 Hans Place.

To my most excellent sister, Elizabeth, by the hands of our well-beloved daughter, these :

A touch of that old malaria, with a measurable temperature, a touch to swear by. Margaret says I must not think of going to Laura's wedding, and I dutifully think of not going. There is much to be thought of here, and it would never do for me to be disabled. A medical certificate will be furnished if desired. Our old enemies do sometimes befriend us. A modern Amritsar rug, not bad, but gaudy enough to please Laura, must help to make my excuses go down.

We are childishly happy and given up to ourselves. Tracy is the only exception ; he is rather sulky at the exuberant youth of Songstress's puppies, whom Margaret insists on calling John and Edward (*i.e.* De Reszke) in defiance of all sporting traditions. Likewise he despises the cats, though he would not commit himself to anything so vulgar as active hostility. John and Edward, on the other hand, have passed through a stage of diplomatic but cold relations to fraternising, which leads to admired disorder from the human point of view. Mr. and Mrs. Square came to pay us a state visit on Wednesday, charged with solemn congratulation (the engagement is known, of course). They found us entirely occupied with watching John and Edward laying siege to Sampson, who had entrenched himself under the sofa ; the puppies whining with excitement, Sampson uttering an occasional mew defiant, Arthur crying 'Fetch en out !', Mr. Follett aiding and abetting with most un-padre-like laughter. The young people had just been telling him they would have nobody else to marry them. The whole party rather wanted to let off steam in some direction, and the puppies and the kitten obligingly

supplied an object. The Squares must have thought us quite mad, but I believe they thought so before.

Mrs. Tallis, who was beginning to think it time for either a marriage or a murder to happen in the neighbourhood, is as brisk as may be, and regrets that there is no more dancing at weddings. She has won Arthur's heart by surrendering to Shipley at the first encounter; it so fell out that he knew more of a local genealogy than she did, having lately found a missing piece of decisive evidence among the witnesses to one of the Thursborough deeds. But Mrs. Tallis has one trouble. A sailor nephew has sent her, with infinite precaution, a charming little Italian owl, and the housekeeper is in mortal fear of bad luck following it. I find these edifying and sound remarks in a paper by an educated Parsi gentleman on superstitions common to Europe and India, in the Bombay Anthropological Society's journal. 'The ugly owl is everywhere considered a bird full of bad omen. I remember the peace of mind of even an English schoolmaster of a high school being disturbed at the sight of an owl on the roof of his school. He did not rest till he made it leave his premises by means of stones.' Mrs. Tallis's housekeeper must be taught not to attempt any counter-charm by means of stones or suchlike. Perhaps we can persuade her that the Italian owl is quite different from the common owl. Why does anybody think an owl ugly? Or a toad, for the matter of that? I do not even share the supposed inborn aversion to snakes. Vipers have, no doubt, to be treated as enemies of man because they are accustomed to bite hounds, not to speak of common dogs. But I maintain that in themselves they are pretty creatures enough. Indian poison-snakes are a graver matter—though you know that more people die officially of snake-bite than ever felt a serpent's tooth. Another maligned bird is the puckeridge, *vulgo*, night-jar, without whose soothing monotone I consider no fine summer evening complete. Was it the noiseless flight that seemed uncanny to our ancestors?

Mr. Follett is a naughtier and more secular clerk than I knew. He and Mrs. Follett were captured by an American family at their Norman village, and the Americans taught them euchre, which they have proceeded to teach us. I am not converted to holding the four-handed game, where the partners are constant, anything like an adequate substitute for whist, though it may do for the young and giddy. But with Shipley we make up five, and then it is a bewildering but fascinating system of shifting triple and

dual alliances, with occasional tacit coalitions against a player who is dangerously near the winning score. Towards the end of the game there is need for high political judgment in bidding or not bidding for the lead, as you have to weigh the advantage of gaining points for yourself against the risk of advancing temporary partners who are also rivals. Altogether it is very like a picture in little of the so-called concert of the Great Powers in Europe. I leave to wiser heads the question who has been most euchred in that game.

I all but forgot to tell you that Harry is on his way home with confidential despatches, and may be in time to represent me at the great function; I have sent a request to that effect to catch him at the War Office. But I expect he has written or telegraphed to you himself.

As to the seals, what I felt was that in the young folks' hands they would be alive for me too. But Margaret and Shipley had something like your thought; they begged to consult before deciding, and they say they will gladly have copies, but I must keep the originals for my own time. So now I hope you will approve without reserve.

Tell me all about the most august wedding.

Your loving brother,

DICKORY.

LL.

*From Miss Elizabeth Etchingham, 83 Hans Place, to
Sir Richard Etchingham, Tolcarne.*

Oh, Richard, Richard, 'tis a shocking thing to be wholly depraved. What am I to do with a creature who, when he should be hasting to the wedding in Sloane Street, remains in Devonshire, and sits down calmly at home to comment upon toads and snakes and vipers and Mrs. Tallises and owls and night-jars? Is this a time to turn to wondering why night-flying 'foules' are birds of ill omen, and to quote learned Parsees and Bombay anthropological journals? If refusing to haste to the wedding, surely good feeling would have prompted the throwing off of a prothalamion sort of note, a song of 'swans of goodly hue,' 'fair plumes' and silken feathers, and a dismissal till more opportune moments of your evil-boding, fatal owl? I am grieved to the core. And your truancy cost us Arthur too.

As to the recurrence of your old attacks, I tell you plainly, my

dear, I don't believe in it. When I said to Margaret, 'Is your father really ill?' Margaret smiled; and though Laura, whose invariable interest in diseases was aroused, had already reached the point of suggesting 'packing' for the lowering of your temperature, 'Will' (I still speak his name between inverted commas), with the crass simplicity of a man, casually let out that you had seen your family off from Buckland Road station and intended to take the parsonage on your way home. Was there ever such an abandoned wretch? (Phantom) toads, snakes, vipers, Mrs. Tallises, owls, night-jars are subjects on which the delirious wax eloquent, but I know you too well to think that your mind, when you wrote, wandered, and no doctor of medicine, but rather a doctor of divinity, would suit the needs of your case, Dickory. However, no more of this for now. I am soon to take charge of you for life, and shall feel it my duty to re-mould your character from the roots. There's one thing, however, I may mention: if Mrs. Tallis is to keep her owl, I must keep my falcon—my merlin to be correct—'To a king belonged the gerfalcon, to a prince the falcon gentle; to an earl the peregrine, to a lady the merlin, to a young squire the hobby, while a yeoman carried a goshawk, a priest a sparrow-hawk, and a knave or servant a kestrel.' (I think my first request to Enticknap will be that he should carry a kestrel.) Mr. Follett's copy of Pliny will explain why Mrs. Tallis's owl requires my falcon—'The falcon, by a secret instinct and societie of nature, seeing the poor howlet thus distressed' (beset by a multitude of antagonistic birds), 'cometh to succour and taketh equal part with him, and so endeth the fray.' Good heavens, what am I doing? Evil communications do corrupt good manners, and I am writing of 'howlets' and leaving every hymeneal task undone.

Presents are pouring in and furniture is pouring out to make room for the wedding-guests that to-morrow will bring. (Trelawney followed his favourite velvet chair to the box-room and, having been searched for high and low, was found there with paws neatly folded under his heavily furred person.) Laura's trunks block every passage; Laura prophesies imminent faints; Blake runs constantly to inform me that her 'ladyship feels she may go off any moment.' There is Margaret to talk to and Cynthia to fortify—dear little Cynthia, who has looked tremulous since she heard that Harry may appear at any moment. There is Minnie in the offing very full of 'A Tribute of Tears,' and

Charles equally full of the homicidal system of drainage that converts the Rectory, of which he has temporary possession, into a 'death-trap,' 'a disseminator of typhoid,' a booking-office for Styx. (I don't believe it is ever safe to trust a clergyman's word on his own drains.) There are flowers to arrange and a thousand marjoram-wreath, saffron-robe, pine-tree torch deeds to do and to prevent being done, so I will wait till to-morrow, till Laura is Lady Pampesford, for my epistle's end.

Wednesday.—The August wedding day. 'Hail, Hymen, Hymenæus hail!'

Richard, as I was coming out of the church after *the* ceremony, I felt my arm gripped and I heard a voice say, 'Any orders to-day, M'm?' and there was my beloved Harry, safe, sound, and sunburnt. Then he greeted Cynthia, and she could not find her voice to answer, and I thought for a moment she would have answered by fainting, for she was as white as her frock. But she did not faint, and Harry saw what I did and was equal to the occasion. In another moment he had put her into a hansom, had followed her into a hansom, and had shouted directions to the driver. Is there time driving from Holy Trinity Church, Sloane Street, to 83 Hans Place, to speak words that alter the hereafter of two lives? Apparently there is. When I caught sight of Harry and Cynthia again, Cynthia was smiling shyly—and Harry? Harry had the desire of his heart, and knew that there are other triumphs than those of an Egyptian campaign. He succeeded in pushing his way presently through the wedding-guest throng that filled to overflowing the drawing-room and found an opportunity to say, 'Is not she a darling?' Yes, she is a darling, and he is something good and delightful also, and they are to be married before he goes out again in November. And they will be happy. They *must* be happy. Why am I so violently anxious that the people I care for should have what they want, when I am always telling myself, and trying to make myself believe, that happiness is but a paltry thing, a thing of small moment after all?

Well, now, again for the wedding. Experts tell me that the wedding went off very well. Consciousness of her gown's merits, and regard for what Blake calls its 'set,' wound Laura up to the semblance of stoical fortitude. (The Camelry has already determined to follow Cynthia's fortunes and not to be tempted by the flesh-pots of Pampesford Royal.) 'Augustus' showed honest emotion, and I quite liked him, when wishing me good-bye he

said, with real feeling if pompous diction, that it was his 'earnest hope that the most cordial relations would be preserved between the families.' (In marrying Laura he imagines himself to be depriving us of something that our unselfishness alone enables us to part with willingly.) The Miss Pampesfords (who have taken the lease of this house off our hands) furtively wiped tears from their eyes, and embraced Margaret and Cynthia and Minnie as well as me. I hoped they were going to press Charles to their hearts also, but Mrs. Vivian dispatched him upon one of her many errands before this caress was brought off. How should you like to find yourself in the clasp of your black and purple dragons?

The time and the place considered, the family and the family's friends and acquaintances made rather a brave show. You were, of course, sorely missed, but yours was about the only vacant place on the dais. The services were well to the fore, as a tottering Admiral uncle was produced by Laura to give her away, and Sir Augustus was 'supported' by a Major Sampson Pampesford, who is evidently looked upon as the Lothario of the house of Pampesford. (Miss Teresa, with kind care for my peace of mind, murmured that 'the Major, though excessively pleasing, is not a man of domestic tastes, and fitted for conjugal happiness, like our brother, my dear Miss Etchingham.') Mrs. Vivian killed two birds with one stone—bringing Azore to see his doctor, and herself and Mr. Vivian to see Laura married. (She asked if I had noticed that the form of Solemnisation of Matrimony was followed in the Prayer Book by the order for the Visitation of the Sick—'the compilers of the Prayer Book, you see, Elizabeth, took in the likelihood that in every marriage one or other would quickly be tormented and worried to death.') Margaret and her Will, I regret to tell you, did their duty by no one but each other. Charles, arms folded and back to wall, sustained the bridegroom with his theories on drainage. Minnie sought fervid copy among Laura's conventionalities. Lady Clementine Mure devoted herself to the wedding's most genial Colonial Bishop. Stephen found Blanche Vivian, and Blanche seemed well content to be found. Mr. Weekes, glancing nervously round the room the while, made timid efforts to talk down Admiral Tidenham's ear-trumpet. Aunt Jane broke out of a bath-chair upon the astounded world, crowned with a bonnet from which sprang a gorgeous orange crest and from which waved an equally gorgeous and striking orange plume. (Laura has hinted that my place for

the future is at Aunt Jane's side, but Aunt Jane does not feel herself in need of a caretaker, and prefers, like many other invalids, liberty, as far as she can get it in a bath-chair, to supervision.) Jem kept Mr. Vivian's taciturnity in countenance, and flew before the orange crest and plume of Aunt Jane, whose passionate desire to learn from his own lips if he found the climate of Oxbridge healthy was thus frustrated. Our cousin, Canon Etchingham, joked ecclesiastically with the self-satisfaction of a portly Church dignitary used to an audience of minor clergy and holy women. The Canoness (very gaudily, not very prettily, attired) was crushed, without realising the crushing, by Mrs. Vivian. Mrs. Carstairs and Mrs. Le Marchant lacerated their neighbours' reputations and arranged for a continuance of an acquaintance thus promisingly begun. Minnie's Mrs. Potters devoted herself to the absent-minded Lord Leyton, who failed to discover that he was politely returning the attentions of a woman who for years had lived within a stone's throw of one of his lodges and had been persistently ignored by Lady Leyton and himself. Lady Leyton meanwhile was too deep in conversation with Mrs. Vivian, and too closely hemmed in by Mrs. Vivian's retinue, to notice the irrevocable catastrophe and recall Lord Leyton to her side and his senses. 'If,' said Aunt Jane, 'that Miss Llanelly' (who asked herself) 'and Mr. Biggleswade' (whom Laura would ask) 'are *not* engaged to be married, I really, really do not know what sort of behaviour we may expect to see next. I really, really do not.' For the rest you must wait till we meet.

We shall meet very soon now, and the play of which the scene is London is very nearly done. (Trelawney and *les* singing birds travel back to their native land with your child to-morrow. She and Will found many books to turn over in the back drawing-room this evening, and Harry and Cynthia did equally well without books on the balcony.) Three days with Alice Newton, two at Vivian-End, and then peaceful Tolcarne for always. . . . I have been saying 'Bless you my children' all round, and I feel to-night as if I wanted to hear some one say, as my father used, and as Mr. Fraser still does, 'God bless you' to me.

Good-bye, Dickory.

Your loving sister,

ELIZABETH.

LII.

From Sir Richard Etchingham, Tolcarne, to Miss Elizabeth Etchingham, 83 Hans Place.

Most uncharitable and sceptical of sisters, I never said I was ill. I said I had monitory symptoms. If I had very much wanted to go to Laura's wedding, and be taken to the hearts of sentimental dragons, I should have gone in defiance of the doctor. Instead of which, Arthur showed a most filial anxiety that I should take care of myself, and, moreover, was willing to renounce the ceremony (Margaret having the best of escort) in order to stay at home too and take care of me. Why should I disappoint his piety? Well, you have done your duty and mine. *Sab tamasha hogyá.* There is something brutal in women's way of abusing their power, and driving poor men to lay bare the weakness of their skill in excuse. We have not your subtilty; which being confessed, you might leave it there. As the ingenious author of 'Cupid's Whirligig' remarked in 1630, 'Man was made when Nature was but an apprentice; but woman when shee was a skilfull Mistress of her Arte.'

And you are really to be here in a week, and this is, I hope, my last letter to you for ever so long! In witness whereof you will note that I seal this with the seal inscribed, 'Say no more.'

Guess no more neither. That other poetess is Mrs. Margaret Woods.

Leagrave has sent Biggleswade a polite and solemn renunciation of all his interest in the projected play. Biggleswade, being mollified with his late good fortune, has been pleased to accept it; so Mr. Follett will not have to set the bishop on him, and the dead season will be the poorer by a curious plaintiff-in-person suit that will not come into court; and the play will be all the work of the egregious Biggleswade and a very precious piece of Wardour Street antiquity.

Now let us indeed say no more, and abide in the beatitude of the other verse: 'If one is in the house, one letter is enough.' It is a fine quality of mystic aphorisms that they will carry many meanings, as the sunlight is one, and yet breaks up into infinite sparkles and colours.

Guftam ki álif: guft digar Hich ma-gú;
dar khánah agar kas ast yak harf bas ast.

Your loving brother,

RICHARD.

NORTH NORFOLK FISH AND FOWL.

WHEN Charles II., on a progress through the North Norfolk heaths to visit Rainham, remarked that the county was only fit to cut up into roads for use elsewhere in England, he could never have seen the Norfolk 'meal marshes' or the Norfolk fen. The latter, which lies at the head of the Wash, formed part of the real 'fen.' The rivers of fen-land, the Great Ouse and the Cam, which now flow out at King's Lynn, formerly overflowed the whole of this district, which was one immense waste of sedge and reeds. As late as fifty years ago some Norfolk people elsewhere still believed that these fen men had undergone some horrible 'adaptation to environment' which left them scarcely human. It was known that they had developed webs between the toes of their feet. But, in addition to this, it was matter of belief that they had 'spotted bellies,' and were fast developing into a race of human frogs.

The whole of this fen is now completely drained, highly cultivated, and abandoned by all the interesting wild-fowl, from grey-lag geese, whose young were caught and reared by the fen men,¹ to the black tern and bittern, the latter of which made the regular Sunday dinner in those parts. Nor are the inhabitants when bathing any longer liable to be mistaken for frogs. They have changed their spots, if they ever had them.

Once since the draining of the North Norfolk Marsh the birds which formerly haunted this fen and nested within its impenetrable marshes did come back. In November 1852 a great flood burst the river bank near Southery. According to the late Mr. H. Stevenson, 'it laid many thousand acres under water for more than six months, making a Paradise for wild-fowl of all kinds, and furnishing ornithologists of this generation with a vision of times past and gone.' Birds whose very names were forgotten came back to breed in the newly made fen on sites they had haunted a century before. Among them were the black tern, and a species still common elsewhere in Norfolk—the black-headed gull. But now these are once more lost to that part of the county, and even the fen herons, which used to nest on the ground among the

¹ According to an account given by Pennant.

sedge, have migrated to distant quarters, and built their nests in trees. But at the present time a vast number of strange and interesting birds dwell further to the east, some in the estuary of the Wash, in the maze of sandbanks and 'mussel scaups' laid bare by the ebb tide; but the greater number abide in the fascinating but little known region of the 'meal marshes,' which fringe the North Norfolk coast from Brancaster and Burnham on the west to the famous marshes of Salthouse on the east.¹

For some twenty miles the coast, instead of being merely edged with sandhills beyond which lies the sea, has a double region of wilderness for its ocean fringe. The sandhills lie far remote from the true shore-line, but parallel with it; the intervening space, from a mile to a mile and a half in width, is filled by the 'meal marshes' belonging more to land than sea, but wholly under the dominion of the salt water, which intersects them in creeks broad and narrow, and at spring tides floods the whole. Samphire, sea lavender, and crab grass cover mile after mile of these marshes, while on the sandhills beyond are the Marram grass, sea holly, and the more familiar flora of 'the dunes.'

Tiny harbours at Burnham, Thornham, and Stiffkey break the 'meals,' and at Wells is a more considerable, though ancient and declining, port. At Burnham and Holkham the marshes are wholly or partly reclaimed, and, being preserved now, swarm not only with the wild-fowl and shore-fowl, but with many species, especially the partridge and the pheasant, formerly absent. A mere catalogue of the birds still common to the district, and of others which have recently been induced to return there, or rescued from approaching extermination and re-established, is evidence of the astonishing attraction of this district for widely different species. Among them are the pinkfooted goose (many hundreds may be seen every winter daily in Holkham marshes), wild duck, teal, widgeon, curlew, scoters, winged plovers, golden plover, knot, grey plover, stints, green plover, whimbrel, many gulls, the merganser (occasionally), the peregrine falcon (daily round Holkham lake), herons, snipe, woodcock, hundreds of hoodie crows, flocks of snow buntings, redshanks, oyster catchers, shel-drakes, and from time to time the sea eagle, the osprey, the marsh harrier, the dotterel (very rarely), and at all times swarms of

¹ The Broad District never, I think, was in direct relation with the Norfolk Fen. It is separated by the whole central plateau of the county, and had its own distinct bird population, as it has now.

partridges on the cultivated land adjacent to the marsh. So, too, in the case of really rare birds, the fascination of this coast seems irresistible. The roller from the sunny south, flashing with sapphire and purple, has been seen hawking for insects over Holkham lake, while Sabine's gull, which scarcely ever leaves the limit of Arctic ice, has been shot in the Wells marshes. It was on the Wells and Holkham sandhills that the swallow-like sand grouse made their temporary home on the last two occasions of their astonishing flight of 4,000 miles from the Steppes of Tartary, and here, in common with many other rare birds, they were protected by the directions of the Earl of Leicester during their temporary sojourn on the sea frontier of his estate. There is strong reason to believe that these birds nested there, if we may judge from the behaviour of one seen in Holkham sandhills by Mr. Alexander Napier.

To either naturalist or sportsman there are few more charming hours than those spent on these moorlands by the sea, among the sea lavender beds, the miles of grey orach plants, the patches of samphire and glasswort, the tidal pools and the winding creeks, with boat, nets, and gun, to give a colour of sport to the enterprise, and a practical object just sufficient to keep the visitor moving, and entice him from marsh to marsh, and from sandhill to creek and channel.

Take boat from Wells Quay as the flood tide is rising, put in the shrimp net, the flounder spear, and a gun if fowl are among the objects of the voyage, and spend the day from breakfast till sunset among the waters, flowers, sunlight, and breeze of this unique region, half land, half sea, in which even the birds never seem decided whether they shall grow web-footed or trust to wings alone,¹ and where plants and flowers seem to have lost their identity and mimic the shapes of the land species, while retaining all the time an undivided allegiance to the pervading influences of tide and sea. In this environment the visitor himself seems to suffer a 'sea change.' His vision wanders far over the miles of sea flat, for there is neither tree nor bush to catch the eye near at hand. It is a land without foreground. On the marshes over which the sea just retains its hold by flooding it at the high 'marsh tides,' there is neither pebble nor

¹ The terns, for instance, which look like swallows and are always on the wing, have webbed feet. The redshanks, which live mainly on the ground but can swim well, have no webs.

stone. The sinuous all-pervading and penetrating 'creeks,' filled and emptied by the tide, are the highways, though there are foot tracks across the flats available at all times, except during the marsh tides. As there are no stones, or thorns, or grits, one soon learns to go bare-foot and bare-legged when the tide is out, walking on the bottom of the creeks, and stepping on the little banks of sand covered in by the tide, or walking through lukewarm pools and trickles, or the mud itself which in this case is not black and foul, but only earth in the finest state of subdivision, carried down from the inland counties by the rivers of the Wash, transported thence in cloudy currents running eastward, and laid in millions of tons in these meal marshes thirty miles from the mouth of the Ouse or Welland. So that as one steps from the boat on to the mud of a North Norfolk creek, one is treading on soil which perhaps not many winters ago was a bit of Huntingdon or Cambridgeshire. There, too, one measures time and shapes one's day, not according to the clock, but according to the tide. It is the place, rather than the sport, which makes the charm of these days in the meal marshes; but there is plenty of incident in the long hours so enjoyed. Last year the writer began the wild-fowl season by a morning sail up into the heart of the marshes on the flood tide. The wide plain of the Wells marshes looked like a moor covered with bluish heather, so vast and brilliant was the stretch of sea lavender blossom, over which the heated air danced and quivered, raising the sandhills on the seaward side many feet above the proper horizon by some minor mirage common on these flats. Among the lavender lay shallow sheets of shining water, now filled by the tide, and the creek, like a winding river, was also three parts full of the heaving, rippling, and poppling waters of the flood, rushing up five miles an hour between the orach-covered banks under the tiny sheep bridges, on which the sheep, rejoicing in a few weeks of sea air and salt food, were lying fast asleep either on the bridges themselves or among the deep beds of orach and sea plants. The tide had just covered the sand banks and sea flats beyond the sandhills, and flocks of white gulls, with a few curlew and whimbrel, were flying and floating over the sandhills and settling on the samphire beds. In the bright sun and heat they were lazy and inclined to settle down and sleep. Only the redshanks were restless, flitting, piping, whistling, and calling, as they flew with

lightning speed in little flocks from creek to creek. The basking places selected by the shore-fowl are not always those which would occur as the most eligible spots for a siesta. At about three parts flood a series of shallow pools, communicating with some of the minor arteries of the creeks, were still smooth levels of soft mud. Round these was a fringe of harder, sun-baked mud, covered with caterpillar-like stems of glasswort, and the whole was embedded in acres of violet sea lavender blossom. Flock after flock of gulls, with many curlew, whimbrel, and redshanks, passed over these pools, and each dropped from the high levels of air to rest, not on the sea lavender, or even on the firm ground, but on the wet, slippery, soft bed of ooze. What its special attraction is the writer knows not; but that was the basking place selected. The gulls look like white stones, the curlews like grey clods, and the parti-coloured redshanks are almost invisible.

My companion—an old gunner and fowler and an adept at ‘calling’ birds—undertook to bring the whole of this company of resting fowl over our heads, for a shot. He preferred to wait till the tide fell before disturbing the marshes; so we pushed up into a narrow creek not wider than a garden path, but with five feet of water flowing up it, and deep beds of ‘crab grass’ fringing it and dipping its pink and grey leaves into the tide, and disembarked on a kind of causeway running across the marshes to the sandhills. The path was fringed with deep green *suæda* bushes, plants which seem able to develop from the merest spores on the sand to a bush like a small juniper. Especially does it love to grow along the edge of high-water mark. Where the tide leaves its fragments and seeds daily on this bank, the *suæda* makes almost a natural hedge across the marshes. Lying in this we found another local fowler, spending his dinner hour, gun in hand, waiting for a shot at a curlew. Him we joined, and sat beside him (on lavender couches) in the shadow of the *suæda* bushes. The terns were busy fishing in a pool near. Hovering and turning as light as pieces of paper over the water, they twisted, poised, or pounced on the water like things of no weight, uttering from time to time a guttural complaining note. There were nearly a hundred nests in the sandhills this year, which were carefully protected all the season. The fowler begged that our veteran would call up some birds for a shot, stating his belief that before he had ever learnt to speak English he could ‘call curlew.’ One or two whimbrel or ‘May birds,’ as the gunners

call them, were on the marshes near, and the old man, slipping into his boat, paddled her into the main creek, and, crouching in her under the opposite bank, whistled loud and shrilly. The whimbrels sprang up, answering the call and flew straight towards us. On so doing, one passed the old gunner and was dropped by a shot from his heavy and oddly balanced gun. This disturbed the other fowl, which made off up the marshes towards Blakeney, and settled nearly a mile further north, where we found them later in the afternoon. This led to a first-class exhibition of the art of 'calling' curlew. We had left our boat in the main creek, while the water, now on the ebb, was fast rushing out from all the minor channels, and the main creek itself held only enough to float the boat. Taking off shoes and stockings, and walking with naked feet in sand, mud, and running water, with the slanting sun still hot and the whole marsh smelling like a salt-pan, we followed endless windings until the fowler arrived opposite the point where the birds had settled in the morning. Sticking our toes into the mud of the bank, we climbed to where our heads were level with the fringe of crab-grass and peeped over. No birds were visible, except a flock of gulls. But the old man knew that the curlew were near. Keeping close under cover of the bank, he began a series of piercing whistles, uttered with the aid of a piece of tin like a croquet clip. In a second the sleepy and silent marsh was full of sound. Curlews screaming, whimbrels calling, the harsh chatter of the terns, and the wild whistle of the redshanks filled the air. In an instant more the whole mixed multitude came drifting over our heads, curlews, gulls, whimbrel, and redshanks together. We shot a brace of curlew, missing two more, when the most astonishing part of the performance began. The old gunner continued whistling, and at the same time shook his cap over the edge of the creek. The birds apparently do not know this trick, and take it for another curlew 'jumping.'¹ Back they came, and another bird was shot; nor did the others leave for some time, but remained as long as the gunner whistled, circling round and screaming, just beyond range of shot. We picked up our birds, and crossed the marshes to the sandhills, where we had permission to shoot some rabbits with the rook rifle.

Stalking there among the 'marram' grass was amusing enough; but having bagged a few we sat down to watch the uncovering of the great barrier sand out at sea.

¹ They may be seen doing this in the large aviary in the Zoo.

Our fowler's reminiscences of this coast extend as far as Lynn westwards. There many years ago he made a bag of thirty-six knots in an afternoon, and made a great reputation in that district, where punting, rather than 'calling,' was most in vogue. He had been sent with another man to take a yacht round to Lynn, and lay her up for the winter. This he did, and leaving the other man aboard, took his gun and went off along the sea wall on the Lincolnshire side of the Wash. There he saw numbers of knot, or 'knet' as he calls them, feeding. The place was a capital one for calling, for the sea wall was only about twenty yards from the birds. Behind this he hid, and, using the right call, he brought the flock over his head time after time. So excited were the birds by the calling, and the sight of the dead birds, and the flapping of the wounded, that he killed the two score without leaving the spot, getting one or two raking shots into the flock, besides doubles and singles. He picked up his birds, put them in a heap, and then went to a farmhouse and borrowed a sack. This he half filled with birds, carried them to an inn near the shore, and laid out his trophies. While he drank his ale these birds were much admired by an amateur gunner, who had had no luck, and inquired the secret. The result was that our old gunner arranged to go out with him next day, when they met with good success again. His fame spread until he was engaged two weeks deep, either for shore shooting or as aid in some private marshes. 'And there sat I,' he continued, 'pricked up in a carriage with the gentlemen, driving to their shooting, and a lot they made of me, until one morning came a letter from my master—at least, the owner of the yacht. In it he say, "Whatever have you done? Hev' you sold the yacht, or is she lost at sea, or whatever are you up to?" Well, there—I'd clean forgot to write and tell him how we'd got safe to Lynn. However, I sent him a letter and a dozen fowl, and he quite understood how it was.'

Fishing is less amusing than fowling on this coast, mainly because there are not enough fish near the shore. Fish are very like game—most of them need *cover* if they are to increase and multiply. 'Cover' under the sea means rocks and wrecks where quantities of seaweed collect, and in the seaweed millions of larvæ, small shellfish, and *entomostraca* swarm. Besides the cover-haunting fish—the pheasants, woodcock, and rabbits of the sea—there are the shoal-fish, such as herrings, which move in multitudes into open waters at certain times of the year, and the

mackerel, neither of which are common on this Norfolk shore, and the various flat fish which do live on the open sand or mud. One would expect these to swarm in the creeks among the marshes and entrance of Wells harbour, but they are not common, though 'pricking for butts' is regularly practised. Probably this scarcity of fish is due to the fact that the harbour and creeks at Wells are purely tidal, and not the estuary of a river. Consequently they lack the great quantity of visible and invisible fish food which even a small river carries down to the sea. Still 'pricking butts' or stalking flat-fish at the ebb in the creeks is very good fun. Barefooted and gazing into the pools, one steps carefully over the beds of sand which pave the bottom of the channel. Feeling with the foot is one means of starting or discovering the fish; but a neater method is to watch for the track which a sole or flounder leaves on the sand as he moves leisurely just over the surface. We provided ourselves with several courses for dinner from the produce of our day in the marshes, including cockle soup, 'butts' with shrimp sauce, roast curlew, and rabbit-pie—not a bad menu after a day so spent. Our old gunner tracked the 'butts' while others were seen and speared. Then taking the shrimp net we ran it just under the low-water mark, where the shrimps were lurking in little hollows in the bank, and soon bagged a pint of fat brown shrimps. The cockles were the celebrated 'Stiffkey blues,' from the vast cockle bed of bluish sand where the Stiffkey river enters the North Sea. To this part of the shore, which lies not in the meal marshes but in a small estuary which the creeks running through the meal marshes join to the Wells harbour, the big turbot occasionally come to spawn. They are then in a semi-sleepy state, and are caught by the shrimpers and others.

Our fisher and fowler, while engaged in the first occupation one August evening, was pushing his shrimp net in front of him when it struck against something which he thought must be a stone. He lifted the net and continued his shrimping, then, returning, struck against the same object again. As he did not remember any stone in that channel, he felt it with his foot, and was instantly aware of the rough prickles on a turbot's back. The fish was so big that he did not know how to deal with it. If he went to the boat to get his spear it might move; if he tried to take it in the shrimp net it would probably escape. He drew his long sailor's knife, with a very thin sharp blade, drove it through the fish, and then with the aid of feet, hands, and knife got it up on the

shelving bank, and ashore. It weighed twenty-four pounds, and was full of spawn. I never could convince him that this fish ought to have been left alone just as much as a spawning salmon. As turbot are good to eat even when spawning, the idea seemed to him quite unpractical. He has taken several other very large female turbot at this time, all lethargic and full of spawn. One he tracked for a hundred yards across the mud, following the trail up in the shallow waters, and secured it with the trident. Formerly there was capital mullet fishing in these creeks. The mullet ran up at certain tides, and were taken in trammel nets just before and after high waters. Now the fish are less common, but occasionally good takes are made, both of these and of sea trout. The latter are perhaps the most uncertain of any long-shore fish on this coast. They are also incomparably the best to eat. One night when out with the nets off Warham only three sea trout were taken up till 1 A.M. These were fine fish, about $3\frac{1}{2}$ lb. each. The boat was then sailed back to Wells, and a haul was made just off the mouth of Wells harbour. This enclosed sixty fish! But all of these were of about the same size, from $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. to $\frac{3}{4}$ lb.

An amusing form of fishing is practised along this coast which is not commonly met with elsewhere. This is done by means of the 'horse net,' used as an instrument to catch sea trout and other fish which come close up to the shore at certain states of the tide.

What determines the movements of these beautiful fish is very little known, so long as they keep in salt water. They will, for instance, visit a shallow sandy bight like Holkham Bay, and remain close to the shore during part of the night, though there is no river with streams and pools to tempt them to ascend. In such places the horse net is used by night to take them. A man mounts a strong carthorse, and rides out with one end of the net into the shallow sea. The other end is held by the fishermen on shore, who walk along parallel with the horse. The net drags behind in a big curve, and from time to time the horse is ridden ashore, the net hauled, and any fish that may be caught extracted. This is a most picturesque sight on a summer night, when the moon is up over the sandhills and the long ripples rolling in from the North Sea. At such times the marshes which lie *inside* the coast line, between the sandhills and their beach, and the firm shore a mile further back, seem alive with fowl, whose wings and voices are heard quite close to the watchers on the shore,

though the creatures themselves are invisible as they flit in perfect security across the flats. Those 'gunners' and local sportsmen who are blessed with more power of seeing in the dark than falls to the lot of most persons are credited with the possession of a 'duck eye.' They do contrive to kill fowl by night, and when the duck were more numerous than at the present time made very fair bags on these marshes. Some of these fowlers, both gentle and simple, conceived an attachment for this form of sport which would scarcely be credited. They literally turned night into day; and none of Colonel Hawker's entries in his diary of 'mud-creeping all night,' and the like, show stronger evidence of the fascination of their pursuit than the authentic accounts of what was done on these Norfolk meal marshes.

Great as is the attraction of this wild region of foreshore and marshes, the writer was always content to leave them after waiting for the 'flight,' when, after watching the evening glow deepen into misty twilight, and twilight becoming absorbed in the deep blue of the star-set sky, he tramped home guided by one of the gunners across the devious pathways of the marsh, made happy by a few fowl shot at dusk, and the recollection of the brief half-hour when the marsh suddenly becomes alive with birds, coming no one knows whither, and flitting, whistling, calling, and croaking in the security of the gloom.

But this hour, when most men think only of retiring to the shelter of the house, and to fireside and dinner, was only the beginning of the activities of these keen fowlers. By four o'clock on a winter's evening they had walked some four or five miles and waited for the flight. When complete darkness came on they moved further up the coast, went out into the tidal flats, and waited for the moon. Then they dug holes in the mud, lined them with marram grass, and waited the whole night through, to take their chance of the ducks and wild geese moving on the sands or mud banks. Often they did not keep company, but one of the pair would watch ambushed a mile or more from the other. There they would remain the whole winter night, if the moon held fair, only leaving their 'duck holes' to repair to the sand-hills, where in a hollow they had a big 5-lb. gunpowder tin full of coffee, which they warmed up by lighting marram grass and drift wood under it. By six o'clock in the morning they would collect their birds, and walk home by starlight, eat 'breakfast'

and go to bed, to get up again about 3 P.M. and repeat the performance. On one occasion a professional gunner was found fast asleep in his 'duck hole,' with the hoar frost whitening on his coat and cap.

There is one form of shooting out in the open sea which gives excellent sport at certain times of the year, but which is scarcely profitable unless the guns are sure that they can dispose of the bag to local people, who appreciate the delicacy provided. This is 'black duck shooting.' The 'black duck' is the scoter, an exclusively sea duck, which as a rule never comes inland.

The scoters live mainly on shell-fish, for which they dive; and there are, out in the Wash, some of the finest beds of shell-fish in England, the celebrated 'mussel scaups' of the Wash. These 'scaups,' which are the great breeding places of the mussel, and afford bait for a great part of the East Coast line fishing, attract not only birds but seals, large numbers of which were seen last autumn near the 'scaups.' Off Hunstanton and Holme ocean ducks congregate in thousands to feed on the mussels, and of these the 'black duck' are far the most numerous. The late Lord Lilford, in a letter to Mr. Gurney dated February 20, 1888, says that some years ago Mr. George Hunt, in a few days' shooting in the Wash, brought home with him 300 'black duck,' much to the satisfaction of cottage people, among whom he distributed them, as they 'combined a fine vehicle for onions with a flavour of fish and fowl!' The water in which they feed is shallow, but they will dive to a great depth.

The fishermen mark the places where the black duck work, because there plaice are also found. Mr. Henry Stevenson, who collected the notes on their habits quoted above, also records that in November 1887 sixty-two scoters were shot by one gun in November, and that although 284 were brought into Hunstanton before February 15, in the winter of 1888, there were thousands left, though they did not decoy quite so well. This decoying is the artistic part of black duck shooting. A number of sham ducks, made of wood or india-rubber and painted black, are let out by lines from the stern of a boat, moored somewhere near the mussel scaups. The scoters see this and come flying over the sea at an astonishing pace: driven partridges do not fly faster or straighter, and as the birds come very low the shots are most difficult. Properly speaking, scoter shooting is a winter sport. Consequently it is cold, and sometimes dangerous if the wind

rises. But the fowler must look to this himself, and see, above all things, that he has a good solid boat, not a mere skiff, and a capable boatman with him. On a bright winter's day there are few more interesting sights to a sportsman and naturalist than this congregation of sea ducks on the grey heaving waters and among the sandbanks of the Wash, on the North Norfolk shore. The constant flight and diving of the different species of duck, the gulls and shore fowl hovering round waiting for the uncovering of the mussel beds, the small craft gathering to take young mussels from the scaups to the fattening beds on the coast, and the chance of seeing and getting a shot at a seal, or a flock of brent geese—make this form of shore sport interesting for the contemplative as well as for the practical sportsman.

C. J. CORNISH,

*A SELF-MADE MAN.¹**AN EXAMPLE OF SUCCESS THAT ANY ONE CAN FOLLOW.*

TOM had a hole in his shoe. It was very round and very uncomfortable, particularly when he went on wet pavements. Rainy days made him feel that he was walking on frozen dollars, although he had only to think for a moment to discover he was not.

He used up almost two packs of playing cards by means of putting four cards at a time inside his shoe as a sort of temporary sole, which usually lasted about half a day. Once he put in four aces for luck. He went down town that morning and got refused work. He thought it wasn't a very extraordinary performance for a young man of ability, and he was not sorry that night to find his packs were entirely out of aces.

One day, Tom was strolling down Broadway. He was in pursuit of work, although his pace was slow. He had found that he must take the matter coolly. So he puffed tenderly at a cigarette and walked as if he owned stock. He imitated success so successfully that if it wasn't for the constant reminder (king, queen, deuce, and tray) in his shoe, he would have gone into a store and bought something.

He had borrowed five cents that morning of his landlady, for his mouth craved tobacco. Although he owed her much for board, she had unlimited confidence in him, because his stock of self-assurance was very large indeed. And as it increased in a proper ratio with the amount of his bills, his relations with her seemed on a firm basis. So he strolled along and smoked, with his confidence in fortune in nowise impaired by his financial condition.

Of a sudden he perceived an old man seated upon a railing, and smoking a clay pipe.

He stopped to look because he wasn't in a hurry, and because it was an unusual thing on Broadway to see old men seated upon railings and smoking clay pipes.

And to his surprise the old man regarded him very intently in return. He stared, with a wistful expression, into Tom's face, and he clasped his hands in trembling excitement.

¹ Copyright in the United States of America by Stephen Crane, 1899.

Tom was filled with astonishment at the old man's strange demeanour. He stood, puffing at his cigarette, and tried to understand matters. Failing, he threw his cigarette away, took a fresh one from his pocket, and approached the old man.

'Got a match?' he inquired pleasantly.

The old man, much agitated, nearly fell from the railing as he leaned dangerously forward.

'Sonny, can you read?' he demanded, in a quavering voice.

'Certainly I can,' said Tom encouragingly. He waived the affair of the match.

The old man fumbled in his pocket. 'You look honest, sonny. I've been lookin' fer an honest feller fur a'most a week. I've set on this railing fur six days,' he cried plaintively.

He drew forth a letter and handed it to Tom. 'Read it fur me, sonny, read it,' he said coaxingly.

Tom took the letter and leaned back against the railings. As he opened it and prepared to read, the old man wriggled like a child at a forbidden feast.

Thundering trucks made frequent interruptions and seven men in a hurry jogged Tom's elbow, but he succeeded in reading what follows:

'Office of Ketchum R. Jones, Attorney-at-Law.

'Tin Can, Nevada, May 19, 18—.

'RUFUS WILKINS, ESQ.

'DEAR SIR,—I have as yet received no acknowledgment of the draft from the sale of the north section lots, which I forwarded to you on June 25. I would request an immediate reply concerning it.

'Since my last I have sold the three corner lots at five thousand each. The city grew so rapidly in that direction that they were surrounded by brick stores almost before you would know it. I have also sold for four thousand dollars the ten acres of outlying sage-bush which you once foolishly tried to give away. Mr. Simpson, of Boston, bought the tract. He is very shrewd, no doubt, but he hasn't been in the West long. Still, I think if he holds it for about a thousand years he may come out all right.

'I worked him with the projected-horse-car-line gag. Inform me of the address of your New York attorneys and I will send on the papers. Pray do not neglect to write me concerning the draft sent on June 25.

'In conclusion I might say that if you have any eastern friends

who are after good western investments, inform them of the glorious future of Tin Can. We now have three railroads, a bank, an electric-light plant, a projected-horse-car line, and an art society. Also, a saw manufactory, a patent car-wheel mill, and a Methodist church. Tin Can is marching forward to take her proud stand as the metropolis of the West. The rose-hued future holds no glories to which Tin Can does not——' Tom stopped abruptly. 'I guess the important part of the letter came first,' he said.

'Yes,' cried the old man, 'I've heard enough. It is just as I thought. George has robbed his dad.'

The old man's frail body quivered with grief. Two tears trickled slowly down the furrows of his face.

'Come, come, now,' said Tom, patting him tenderly on the back. 'Brace up, old feller. What you want to do is to get a lawyer and go put the screws on George.'

'Is it really?' asked the old man eagerly.

'Certainly it is,' said Tom.

'All right,' cried the old man, with enthusiasm; 'tell me where to get one.' He slid down from the railing and prepared to start off.

Tom reflected. 'Well,' he said finally, 'I might do for one myself.'

'What!' shouted the old man in a voice of admiration, 'are you a lawyer as well as a reader?'

'Well,' said Tom again, 'I might appear to advantage as one. All you need is a big front,' he added slowly. He was a profane young man.

The old man seized him by the arm. 'Come on, then,' he cried, 'and we'll go put the screws on George.'

Tom permitted himself to be dragged by the weak arms of his companion around a corner and along a side-street. As they proceeded, he was internally bracing himself for a struggle, and putting large bales of self-assurance around where they would be likely to obstruct the advance of discovery and defeat.

By the time they reached a brown stone house, hidden away in a street of shops and warehouses, his mental balance was so admirable that he seemed to be in possession of enough information and brains to ruin half the city, and he was no more concerned about the king, queen, deuce and tray than if they had been discards that didn't fit his draw. Too, he infused so much confidence and courage into his companion, that the old man went along the

street breathing war, like a decrepit hound on the scent of new blood.

He ambled up the steps of the brown stone house as if he were charging earthworks. He unlocked the door, and they passed along a dark hall-way. In a rear room they found a man seated at table engaged with a very late breakfast. He had a diamond in his shirt front, and a bit of egg on his cuff.

'George,' said the old man in a fierce voice that came from his aged throat with a sound like the crackle of burning twigs, 'here's my lawyer, Mr. —er—ah—Smith, and we want to know what you did with the draft that was sent on June 25th.'

The old man delivered the words as if each one was a musket shot. George's coffee spilled softly upon the table-cover, and his fingers worked convulsively upon a slice of bread. He turned a white, astonished face toward the old man and the intrepid Thomas.

The latter, straight and tall, with a highly legal air, stood at the old man's side. His glowing eyes were fixed upon the face of the man at the table. They seemed like two little detective cameras taking pictures of the other man's thoughts.

'Father, what d-do you mean?' faltered George, totally unable to withstand the two cameras and the highly legal air.

'What do I mean?' said the old man with a feeble roar, as from an ancient lion; 'I mean that draft—that's what I mean. Give it up, or we'll—we'll——' he paused to gain courage by a glance at the formidable figure at his side, 'we'll put the screws on you.'

'Well, I was—I was only borrowin' it for 'bout a month,' said George.

'Ah,' said Tom.

George started, glared at Tom, and then began to shiver like an animal with a broken back.

There were a few moments of silence. The old man was fumbling about in his mind for more imprecations. George was wilting and turning limp before the glittering orbs of the valiant attorney. The latter, content with the exalted advantage he had gained by the use of the expression, 'Ah,' spoke no more, but continued to stare.

'Well,' said George finally, in a weak voice, 'I s'pose I can give you a check for it, though I was only borrowin' it for 'bout a month. I don't think you have treated me fairly, father, with your

lawyers, and your threats, and all that. But I'll give you the check.'

The old man turned to his attorney. 'Well?' he asked. Tom looked at the son and held an impressive debate with himself. 'I think we may accept the check,' he said coldly, after a time.

George arose and tottered across the room. He drew a check that made the attorney's heart come privately into his mouth. As he and his client passed triumphantly out, he turned a last highly legal glare upon George that reduced that individual to a mere paste.

On the sidewalk the old man went into a spasm of delight and called his attorney all the admiring and endearing names there were to be had.

'Lord, how you settled him!' he cried ecstatically. They walked slowly back toward Broadway. 'The scoundrel,' murmured the old man. 'I'll never see 'im again. I'll desert 'im. I'll find a nice quiet boarding-place, and ——'

'That's all right,' said Tom. 'I know one. I'll take you right up,' which he did.

He came near being happy ever after. The old man lived at advanced rates in the front room at Tom's boarding-house. And the latter basked in the proprietress's smiles, which had a commercial value and were a great improvement on many we see.

The old man, with his quantities of sage-bush, thought Thomas owned all the virtues mentioned in high-class literature, and his opinion, too, was of commercial value. Also, he knew a man who knew another man who received an impetus which made him engage Thomas on terms that were highly satisfactory. Then it was that the latter learned he had not succeeded sooner because he did not know a man who knew another man.

So it came to pass that Tom grew to be Thomas G. Somebody. He achieved that position in life from which he could hold out for good wines when he went to poor restaurants. His name became entangled with the name of Wilkins in the ownership of vast and valuable tracts of sage-bush in Tin Can, Nevada.

At the present day he is so great that he lunches frugally at high prices. His fame has spread through the land as a man who carved his way to fortune with no help but his undaunted pluck, his tireless energy, and his sterling integrity.

Newspapers apply to him now, and he writes long signed articles to struggling young men, in which he gives the best possible advice as to how to become wealthy. In these articles he, in a burst of glorification, cites the king, queen, deuce, and tray, the four aces, and all that. He alludes tenderly to the nickel he borrowed and spent for cigarettes as the foundation of his fortune.

'To succeed in life,' he writes, 'the youth of America have only to see an old man seated upon a railing and smoking a clay pipe. Then go up and ask him for a match.'

STEPHEN CRANE.

A MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE.

FIVE-AND-FIFTY years ago there were few more rising solicitors in the City of London than William Henry Barber. After a long service as articled clerk in a country office, he had come to town to start practice on his own account, and having found a suitable partner was rapidly forming the nucleus of an extensive business. In the prime of life, endowed with a first-rate physique, a clear head, and indefatigable industry, he bade fair to raise the firm of Barber & Bircham to a well-deserved eminence.

Among their clients was a certain Mr. Fletcher, a retired surgeon of considerable wealth, living with his family in a house of his own at Camberwell, and much looked up to in the neighbourhood; a man moreover of good education and of gentlemanly but reserved deportment. The bulk of the work in which he was concerned consisted of the preparation of agreements with his numerous tenants and the occasional investment and transfer of his capital; but in course of time he proceeded to introduce a class of business somewhat unusual, but in no way outside the scope of the profession.

Under the law as it then stood, all dividends on Government stock remaining unclaimed for a period of ten years were carried over with their principal to the account of the National Debt, subject to being recovered should a claimant establish his identity and title to the satisfaction of the authorities of the Bank of England, and it was provided that, immediately upon such transfer being made, the names in which the stock had previously stood, together with the description of the parties and the amount transferred, should be entered upon a list at the Bank, and be open for inspection. These conditions appear not to have been literally complied with; for though the *amount* of the stock transferred could always be obtained through the medium of a stockbroker, it was not included in the published lists. But the senior clerk in the Unclaimed Dividend Office, a man named Christmas, was in the habit, for a consideration, of supplying Fletcher with full details, and in this way, without obtruding his own personality, he became the means of restoring a large amount of stock and dividends to the rightful, but unsuspecting owners. At the same time he was not philanthropical enough to work without remunera-

tion, and the agreements in this behalf required to be drawn up in due legal form, while the formalities connected with the proving of wills and the general establishment of titles came also within the province of Messrs. Barber & Bircham. Moreover, it sometimes fell to their lot, and to that of Barber in particular, to conduct the delicate negotiations by which the identity of the rightful owners was made clear without putting them on a track which would have enabled them to dispense with the services of Fletcher.

Between 1839 and 1842, Barber had acted in no less than nine of these investigations, all of which he had carried to a successful termination. The remuneration had been small, practically little more than out-of-pocket expenses, but Fletcher's general business was lucrative to the firm, and the transactions, though somewhat out of the ordinary way, presented no very exceptional features. Accordingly, Barber felt no surprise when, early in October 1842, Fletcher wrote to tell him that he had ascertained that there was standing in the books of the Bank a sum of 3,500*l.* stock in the name of Anne Slack, of Smith Street, Chelsea, and that a lady of that name was living at Abbot's Langley, in the house of her brother-in-law, Captain Foscett. Barber was requested to ascertain whether she was the Anne Slack in question, and if she was aware of her rights, but on no account to disclose to her the nature of the property without Fletcher's express sanction.

Accordingly, on October 4th a letter was written asking Captain Foscett whether he could give Messrs. Barber & Bircham any information as to who were the legal personal representatives of Anne Slack formerly of Chelsea, spinster. The Captain replied that Anne Slack was his wife's sister and now resided with them, but about twelve years previously she had lived in Smith Street, Chelsea. Circumstances seemed to point very strongly to the identity of the two, but the presumption was destined to be rebutted by a statement made by Captain Foscett in the course of an interview with Barber in the month of November, in which he said his sister-in-law's age would be about twenty-seven. On reporting this to Fletcher the latter replied, 'Then she cannot be the party, as the owner of the stock executed a power of attorney twelve years ago when Miss Slack of Abbot's Langley would have been a minor. But,' he continued, 'if you can obtain her handwriting, I will have it compared with the signature at the Bank, which will effectually determine the question.'

In the course of December, Barber obtained from the Captain a letter of Miss Slack's, which he handed over to Fletcher; and after a few days the latter returned it, saying that the two Annes could not be the same. Miss Slack of Abbot's Langley was possessed of a sum of 6,000*l.* stock, and her signature to it in the Bank books was exactly the same as in her test letter, but the signature to the unclaimed 3,500*l.* was as unlike that in the letter as ordinary writing was unlike print. This was conclusive, and on December 21st a letter was written to inform Captain Foskett's solicitors that the signatures did not correspond, and that the identity could not be supported.

During the whole course of these negotiations the inquirers had had a second string to their bow, for almost at the commencement Fletcher had informed his solicitors that he had unearthed at Somerset House an entry of the death of an Anne Slack, formerly of Chelsea, who appeared to have died recently at Bath. To Bath accordingly he turned his footsteps early in the New Year to inquire and advertise, and towards the end of January 1843 a letter was received in Barber's office from a Jane Slack of Bath, stating that she was the niece of the deceased Anne Slack. A lengthy correspondence ensued, which was terminated by a letter from the lady on March 9th, saying that she was satisfied that she could not be the party inquired after.

Success in the pursuit seemed further off than ever, but Fletcher did not despair; he ordered an advertisement to be inserted in the 'Times,' and on March 15th turned up at the office with the news that he had at last discovered the rightful claimant. While superintending some repairs in a house in Westminster, he had got into conversation with one of the workmen who came from Chelsea, and who, on being asked if he knew anyone of the name of Slack, had put him on a scent which resulted in the discovery, near Tottenham Court Road, of the niece of the owner of the stock. One circumstance, however, detracted from his satisfaction. The lady was aware of her rights, for the aunt had left a will in which the sum of stock was expressly mentioned, and, as he had no information to give, he could expect no reward, but the services of a solicitor would be desirable in establishing the identification, and he had recommended their firm.

On the following morning Miss Slack appeared, accompanied by Fletcher. She was dressed in black and seemed the essence of middle-class respectability, her precision of attire and stiffness of

manner being characteristic of a spinster of five-and-thirty. She brought with her the certificate of her aunt's death, which had been registered in Pimlico in the preceding February, and she also produced the will, the signature of which corresponded with the description given by Fletcher of the one in the Bank books.

As the result of the interview the firm agreed to act for her, and Fletcher undertook to advance the probate duty, a sum of 80*l*. Barber then accompanied her to Doctors' Commons, where she proved the will in the ordinary way, after it had been attentively perused by the Proctor. In due course the probate was received by the solicitors, who lodged it at the Bank and prepared the application to that body for the transfer of the stock into the name of the executrix, the bulk of this business being transacted by Bircham, owing to his partner's absence from London. And on April 7th, the formalities having been all disposed of, Barber went with his client to the Bank, where she signed the necessary books and received the stock and unclaimed dividends amounting in all to 4,600*l*.; 600*l*. was paid over in gold by Miss Slack's desire, and, as the bag containing it was heavy, Barber carried it for her. On leaving the Bank they met Fletcher and adjourned to Barber's office. Fletcher was repaid his 80*l*. and received in addition a *douceur* of 5*l*., which he accepted with some dissatisfaction. The solicitors' costs, amounting to 15*l*., were paid, the receipt signed, and Miss Slack quitted the office in Fletcher's company, carrying with her the residue of the funds.

The business now seemed settled, though there was a possibility of fresh complications from a fact which Fletcher had mentioned on April 3rd to Barber and his partner—namely, that the Bank had made an error in their books and had entered as 'deceased,' not only the old Miss Slack, whose will had just been proved, but also Miss Slack of Abbot's Langley, who, as we have seen, was the owner of 6,000*l*. stock. This, however, as Barber pointed out, was no concern of his, and he had dismissed it from his mind when, about the middle of November, Mr. James Freshfield, the solicitor of the Bank, paid him a call. He had come, he said, in reference to a sum of stock which had been transferred from the name of Miss Anne Slack under a will which had been proved by Mr. Barber and which was irregular. Barber demurred to this statement, and said that the transaction had been perfectly regular and all proper inquiries made, whereupon Mr. Freshfield asked for the name of the person who had introduced

Miss Emma Slack to them. Barber declined to communicate the name of a client, and the Bank solicitor said it was necessary to apprise him that a fraud and forgery had been committed and that he was gravely implicated in the transaction by the fact that he had been inquiring and negotiating respecting the property six months before the alleged death of Miss Anne Slack. This statement produced a good deal of heat between the two solicitors, but Barber professed himself willing to help the Bank in any way, and showed Mr. Freshfield his books, but he still declined to give up the name of his client *without the latter's consent*.

Barber immediately obtained an interview with Fletcher, who assured him that the matter was all a mistake, and one which he knew from his friend at the Bank would soon be rectified, and, when he expressed his intention of communicating with the Bank authorities, Fletcher dissuaded him on the ground that it would afford them another opportunity for learning the source of his information: Barber was satisfied and acquiesced. Three weeks and more passed without his hearing anything further from the Bank, when suddenly the blow fell. On the morning of December 9th, as he was going to the office, he was arrested, taken to the Mansion House, searched, and his pocketbook, papers, and office-keys taken from him. The fraud and forgery alluded to by Mr. Freshfield had been at last unravelled.

Owing to the blunder by which Miss Slack of Abbot's Langley had been entered as 'deceased,' her October dividends were not paid to her. Inquiry was made, with the result of establishing that she was really entitled after all to the 3,500*l.* which had been transferred in the preceding April. So far from being twenty-seven years of age, as Captain Foskett had most unaccountably represented, she was nearly thirty-eight, and about twelve years previously she had executed a power of attorney to a Mr. Hulme who managed her affairs. He died shortly after, and, incredible as it appears, she had utterly forgotten the existence of this stock. Once satisfied of the mistake, the Bank was confronted with the question of the identity of the Miss Emma Slack, who had appeared on April 7th. Investigation brought to light a series of frauds of unparalleled audacity and ingenuity in which Fletcher and a body of confederates had been engaged for years.

Immediately upon receiving the information from Christmas, and long before mentioning the matter to Barber, he had set to work, in conjunction with one of his tools named Sanders, a Bristol

fishmonger. Research and expenditure of money revealed the existence of Miss Slack, of Abbot's Langley, and not till then were Barber's services requisitioned. We have seen that, in spite of the coincidence of name and residence, Captain Foskett's statement as to his sister-in-law's age had convinced Barber that the latter was not the rightful claimant, and that Fletcher's assurance that her handwriting differed from that in the bank-books clinched the matter. But, in reality, the comparison of the signatures made by Christmas had shown Fletcher that they were identical, and that Miss Slack was entitled to the stock, though it was clear she had forgotten all about the power of attorney.

The way was now open, and a will was fabricated purporting to be that of Anne Slack, and bequeathing the sum of 3,500*l.* stock in the Bank books to an imaginary niece, *Jane Slack, of Bath*, at which place Sanders procured the registration of the death of the spurious testatrix. The next step was to advertise in the '*Bath and Cheltenham Gazette*,' and for Mrs. Sanders, another of the gang, to take up her residence at Bath and answer the advertisement. We have seen that this lady was put into correspondence with Mr. Barber and his partner, and that after a lengthy negotiation her claim was abruptly withdrawn. The reason was that, owing to some mistake, the name of the supposititious deceased had been registered at Somerset House as *Stock*, instead of Slack, and the officials refused to correct the entry without a personal interview, which Sanders was unwilling to give. Finally, it was agreed upon between him and Fletcher that they should change the venue and make a fresh registration. Pimlico was fixed upon: there the death of Anne Slack was once more registered; and a few days afterwards a certificate was procured. The forged will, however, was no longer applicable, and a new one was necessary. The former one had been copied out by Sanders, but he had since then written more than one letter to Barber in the name of Jane Slack, and Fletcher was apprehensive lest he should be struck by similarity in the handwriting. Resort was therefore had to a Mrs. Dorey, another of Fletcher's agents and sister to Mrs. Sanders, and the stock was once more bequeathed, this time to *Emma Slack*. With the rest of the story we are familiar. It was Mrs. Sanders who personated Emma both at Barber's office and at the Bank, elaborately disguised with a false front, spectacles, and a veil, and it was in her lodgings that the booty was shared

between Fletcher and the other parties, not forgetting a commission of 5*l.* per cent. for Christmas.

It must not be supposed that all these facts were in the possession of the Bank authorities, but they knew quite enough to fill them with alarm and indignation. They had been induced in this case to part with over 4,000*l.* by means of a forged will and a fraudulent identification, and further researches were bringing to light a series of ten or a dozen similar frauds, in three of which Barber had likewise been the acting solicitor. His conduct in refusing to give up his client's name had created an unfavourable impression: the whole scheme was one which seemed to require legal knowledge and business faculties; it is not to be wondered at that Barber was pitched on as the prime mover.

Meanwhile, we have left him in custody at the Mansion House. After some delay his partner Bircham was communicated with, and despatched in search of Fletcher, and he returned with him, while Clarkson, who appeared to prosecute, was opening the case. Miss Anne Slack was put into the box, and, after telling her story, was sharply cross-examined by Barber; but at an early stage counsel intimated that no explanation could be satisfactory which left untouched the identity of Emma Slack and of the person who introduced her to Barber. Thereupon, after some consultation, the latter replied that he would produce the gentleman who had done so, and who knew that she had brought the will to him; 'I call Joshua Fletcher.'

This determination had not been arrived at without much resistance on the part of the latter, who raised every objection, pleading that he might be pressed to divulge the name of his informant at the Bank. Stung beyond endurance, Barber reminded him of the account he had given of the discovery of Emma Slack, and told him he had nothing to do but to tell the simple truth.

This surely cannot prejudice you, whilst it is the only thing that can exonerate me. Refuse, if you please, to disclose your friend's name, but for God's sake don't build up one particle of fiction.

Fletcher was sworn, and told virtually the same story as he had given to Barber, but, however plausible it may have originally appeared, coming by instalments in the midst of other professional business, and as the climax to a long chase after a missing heiress, it sounded very differently in the unsympathetic atmosphere of a police court, especially when the foundation had just been cut

from under it by the production in the flesh of the real Anne Slack. Under cross-examination the last shreds of plausibility vanished. Fletcher was involved in a labyrinth of contradictions and inconsistencies, and at the close of his evidence he was committed to custody on the charge of being an accessory. It was evident that only the threshold of the fraud had been reached: the prisoners were remanded, and bail was peremptorily refused.

This was only the first of a long series of remands, and the difficulties which the refusal of bail occasioned to Barber can hardly be described. His papers and office books had been ransacked by the prosecution, his creditors had come down on the assets of the firm; it was impossible to collect the book debts that were due, and so far had he been from suspecting the heavy charge which was impending that, though three weeks had elapsed between Mr. Freshfield's menacing visit and the arrest, he had taken no steps to provide himself with funds for the defence; his consultations with his solicitor were necessarily carried on under every disadvantage, and at every turn he found himself hampered and embarrassed.

It was no short or easy task for the Bank authorities to select their cases or shape them for trial. With regard to Miss Slack, Fletcher was identified as the man who had registered the death in Pimlico, and on January 23rd another prisoner appeared in the shape of Mrs. Dorey, whose full share in the Slack case was unknown to the prosecution, but who had personated one Jane Blake in an earlier fraud, wherein a false Miss Stewart had claimed and received a large sum of Consols and dividends. By the confession of an accomplice named Griffin this latter case was proved up to the hilt against Fletcher and Mrs. Dorey, and two other charges relating to persons named Burchard and Hunt were gone into with a similar result. But though Mr. Clarkson kept on asseverating that Barber had acted throughout with a degree of ingenuity and cunning which could not easily be equalled, there was little in these cases to incriminate him beyond the fact that he, or rather his firm, had acted as solicitors in them. The fraud on Miss Slack undoubtedly presented more suspicious features, but here the evidence was for a long time deficient. No tidings could be obtained of Mrs. Sanders, and without her the prosecution were reluctant to go to trial. However, the long arm of the law was not to be evaded: she and her husband were at length arrested in Edinburgh, produced in court on March 24th, and fully

identified. The examinations were now concluded, and the whole party committed to the Old Bailey.

The trials commenced on April 11th. The judges were Baron Gurney and Justices Williams and Maule. The prosecution was conducted by the Attorney-General (Sir Frederick Pollock), Clarkson, and several others. Barber was in desperate want of money, and could find no adequate fee for counsel, but Serjeant Wilkins, then in the enjoyment of a big criminal practice, who had appeared for Mrs. Dorey before the Lord Mayor, and had thrown up his brief in disgust at her duplicity, was convinced of Barber's innocence, and undertook to defend him for an almost nominal sum. Greaves, and Ballantine, afterwards the famous Serjeant, appeared for Fletcher, and the others were variously represented.

Before the proceedings commenced Wilkins applied that the prisoners, or at any rate Barber, might have a separate trial. It was a case, he contended, in which it was absolutely essential for his client to be enabled to call the other prisoners as witnesses. Baron Gurney replied that this could only be done if the prosecution assented, and the Attorney-General said that he felt bound to decline in the interests of justice. The application being refused, the case of Stewart was called on, in which Barber, Fletcher, and Mrs. Dorey were charged with inciting Susannah Richards, deceased, the mother of Mrs. Dorey and Mrs. Sanders, to forge an administration bond. Into the complicated facts of this story space does not allow of our entering. The evidence against Fletcher and Mrs. Dorey was absolutely conclusive, much of it being supplied by the written confession of the latter, but there was little to show that Barber had acted otherwise than any professional man might have done. Before the Lord Mayor there had been scarcely any evidence at all against him, but now the prosecution produced a witness whose testimony, if reliable, was gravely incriminating. It had been established that Fletcher had gone down to Marlow to lay the foundation of the plot in May 1840, and it was admitted that Barber had gone there in connection with the business in the middle of the October following; but an innkeeper, named Hyatt, was now called, who swore most positively that this visit had taken place in *May*, within a fortnight after that of Fletcher. This put a totally different complexion on the visit, making it previous to the forging of the bond instead of some weeks afterwards, and thus introducing Barber into the case as a presumed agent of fraud instead of a

solicitor prosecuting a subsequent *bona-fide* inquiry. Fortunately the hotel bill had been preserved, and it supplied Wilkins with material for a most effective piece of cross-examination.

He handed it to the witness, turning down the top where the date was written, and asked him if that was his writing, and if the items charged were correct, to both of which questions he replied in the affirmative. Taking back the bill Wilkins said :

Did Mr. Barber visit you more than once?—No. Are you quite sure that Barber's visit was within a fortnight after Fletcher's?—Yes; of that I am quite certain. Now, recollect yourself. You say Barber was never at your house but once; you are quite sure that it was not in October?—Yes, I am positive of that.

Counsel then returned him the bill with the top turned up, saying, 'Look at the date of that.' It was October 13th, 1840, the very day recorded in Barber's diary, and four months after the time so pertinaciously sworn to by the witness.

After this Hyatt's testimony was gone. Baron Gurney, in his summing up, showed clearly what he thought of him and of the case against Barber, and at the conclusion of the four days' trial the latter was acquitted, while Fletcher and Mrs. Dorey were convicted. Barber's demeanour in the dock had been that of a man confident in his innocence, and he was warmly congratulated on all sides. But a sterner ordeal was to come, when, on the next day, the Crown proceeded with the case of Slack, in which Barber, Fletcher, Mrs. Dorey, and the two Sanders were jointly arraigned.

Changes had taken place in the personnel of the Court. Baron Gurney, an essentially strong judge, was no longer sitting, and Mr. Justice Williams was a substitute of much less independent mind. The Attorney-General had vanished from the scene to fill the position of Chief Baron vacated by the death of Lord Abinger, and his place was taken by Mr. Erle, Q.C., afterwards Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, an advocate of great strength and industry. He was a formidable opponent under any circumstances, and far more than a match for Mr. Wilkins. The latter gentleman was a leader of the Old Bailey Bar, who, after a somewhat mysterious career, owed a large practice less to acquaintance with the law than to a wide and extensive knowledge of human nature, great fluency of speech, and a dauntless audacity, which had a tendency to degenerate into brow-beating. He was thoroughly at home in the ordinary run of criminal work, and had dragged

many a prisoner out of the dock in the teeth of facts and reason ; but in a complicated case, which required close analysis, the careful handling of a mass of detail, together with dexterity and tact, he was apt to lose his head, to miss the bearing of essential points, and to trust too much to the effect upon the jury of his sonorous platitudes.

There can be no doubt that the prosecution were profoundly dissatisfied with the verdict in the previous case. They were convinced that Barber was quite as guilty as Fletcher, and, from his standing as a solicitor, the more dangerous criminal of the two, and it is hardly too much to say that every nerve was strained to obtain a conviction. The point of view of the Crown is very clearly expressed by Mr. Erle in his opening speech :

The great question with regard to Barber was whether he had a guilty knowledge of the fraudulent nature of these transactions. The stock had been identified as belonging to Anne Slack, of Smith Street, Chelsea, and it was for the jury to say whether any man in the situation of Barber could have doubted as to the ownership of that stock when he found a person who in all respects answered the description in the Bank books, which was the case of Miss Anne Slack, of Abbot's Langley. Then, under what circumstances was the claim of Emma Slack brought forward ? Contrast the cautious inquiries of Barber in the case of Anne with his conduct in the case of the pretended Emma. The latter was an utter stranger to Barber, and yet she was taken to the Bank and obtained the stock upon his sole credit and introduction. Then let them look at the conduct of Barber when inquiries were afterwards made of him as to Emma Slack, and say whether there was any reasonable doubt in their minds that he was cognisant of the crime in which the others participated.

The evidence for the prosecution occupied more than two days, and the general effect of it has been already given ; much of it was purely formal, much of it only concerned the guilt of Fletcher, the Sanders's, and Mrs. Dorey, the latter of whom withdrew her plea of Not Guilty on the morning of the third day, but there were some points on which it tends to elucidate the story and explain the result.

Miss Slack was evidently quite unaccustomed to the transaction of business, and as it appeared that, independently of the fraudulently transferred stock, she possessed an income of 500*l.* a year, her statement that she had forgotten all about these particular dividends was plausible enough. Christmas, the Bank clerk whose faithlessness to his trust had rendered possible the fraud, swore that the signature of Anne Slack's shown him by Fletcher *did* resemble that on the power of attorney, whereas it will be remembered that Fletcher's representation that the two were totally dis-

similar had a fatal effect upon Barber's judgment. The evidence given as to the false registration in Pimlico revealed an extraordinary laxity in the office with regard to the way in which statements both of names of persons and localities were received, and the Proctor, by whom the forged will had been proved, gave Barber the highest character, and described the whole affair as a most ordinary transaction. If Barber had not exercised proper caution in sifting the matter, it was clear that other parties had exercised even less.

Even on the showing of Captain Foskett, who was a hostile witness, and whose testimony was on the whole decidedly prejudicial to Barber, it seems clear that the latter, in the first of their interviews, threw out his net as widely as was possible without communicating the whole story, on which point his instructions were preptory.

He first asked me, said the Captain, what property Miss Slack possessed: whether she had landed property; whether she had funded property, and to a large amount; whether she managed her affairs herself; *what was her age; if she had ever signed a power of attorney*; and if I believed she had received all that was due to her.

To not one of these leading questions did Captain Foskett respond in a manner to assist his interrogator, and in cross-examination he admitted that—

I told Mr. Barber that I did not know exactly Miss Slack's age; I might have said she was about twenty-seven. I do not know her age precisely: he said forty would do, therefore I took no great trouble to remember.

The Bank clerks spoke to Barber carrying away the bag of gold, and it was alleged that the memorandum specifying the details of payment was in his handwriting. The produce of the notes so given was traced to Fletcher and the Sanders's, and there was nothing to bring any of it home to Barber, except a vague and uncorroborated statement that one of the big notes had been changed in his presence. Lastly came Mr. Freshfield, clearheaded, deliberate, firmly impressed with Barber's guilt: his evidence was calculated to produce a very damaging effect. In substance it did not amount to more than we have given on a previous page, but the impression which the interview had left on the experienced Bank solicitor must have communicated itself to many parts of the court. An adroit handling in cross-examination would have gone some way towards removing this, but Wilkins's headlong attack on the witness was little adapted for the purpose.

Put that paper aside, and repeat to the jury what you have said.—Pray, had you forgotten that when you made that memorandum?—Was it wilfully omitted, yes or no?

A client's case is grievously prejudiced when such a tone is adopted towards a witness of character and integrity, and when Wilkins came to address the jury he fell into the same fatal error, and launched forth into a fierce personal attack. Not content with asserting that the acrimony displayed by the Bank was due to their own carelessness being detected, he assailed Mr. Freshfield with almost brutal violence: 'He would deal with him as if he were the veriest Lazarus who ever crawled upon the earth;' and he maintained that his testimony was absolutely vitiated by the admission that Mr. Freshfield had omitted to mention that Barber had shown heat and indignation at their interview.

Apart, however, from this blunder, Wilkins made some excellent points. As to the general conspiracy, he pointed out that there was no proof of intimacy between Barber and Fletcher other than that created by their professional relations, and nothing whatever to connect him with the Sanders's and Mrs. Dorey. Where was Barber's share in the produce of the fraud other than the paltry remuneration of 15*l.*? and would he have dared to call Fletcher at the Mansion House if they had been confederates? If the will was suspicious on the face of it, why had it failed to suggest investigation at Doctors' Commons and in the Bank itself? On the contrary, the bulk of the precautions taken by Fletcher were with the object of blinding Barber rather than the authorities. The registration of death and the certificate were not required at the Bank or at the Commons; they were only needed to lull Barber's suspicions. Then, again, it was Captain Foskett who was entirely responsible for the first doubt in Barber's mind as to Anne Slack's identity, and what he said and did in his correspondence and interviews was enough to persuade any reasonable man that his sister-in-law was not entitled to the stock and dividends.

Erle's reply was short and deadly: its effect was produced as much by the character and evident conviction of the speaker as by the arguments themselves, though marshalled with a telling simplicity and directness. Barber, he said, bore the outward and visible marks of crime upon him; it was through him that the fraud was perpetrated, and he invited the jury to consider his conduct before the uttering of the will, at the time, and after the matter was finished. The negotiation itself was not the ordinary

business of an attorney, and it was clear that Barber had been co-operating with Fletcher in this unprofessional way for a long time previously. As to the alleged statement by Captain Foskett that Anne Slack was only twenty-seven, it was merely an after-thought of the defence to eke out the case, and no reasonable man could have had a doubt that in her the real claimant had been discovered: it was only because no pecuniary offer was made that the treaty closed. The claim of Miss Jane Slack had been renounced on March 9th. What had occurred between that date and the 16th, when Miss Emma appeared on the scene to convince Barber of the genuineness of the propounded will? Was his conduct at the Bank that of an ordinary solicitor, and was not the fact of his walking out with 600*l.* in sovereigns suspicious in itself, even though none of them were traced to him? Lastly, at the interview with Mr. Freshfield, Barber had refused to disclose the name of his client, though he knew that a crime had been committed; and, if he were an innocent man, he had the deepest interest in discovering who was the person that had imposed on him.

The judge's summing-up calls for no comment, it was a colourless production, and left the effect of Erle's reply all the more rooted in the minds of the jury, yet it was eminently an occasion which needed discriminating direction from the Court. Apart from the complex nature of the facts, Mr. Erle had, no doubt unconsciously, strained them somewhat against the prisoner; it may be conjectured that his tone would have been different had he been longer conversant with the case, or even taken part in the preceding trial which resulted in Barber's acquittal.

After retiring for some considerable interval, the jury brought back a verdict of guilty. Barber was manifestly astounded; but he recovered himself, and saying, 'Gentlemen, I am *not* guilty. My Lord, Fletcher knows I am not guilty;' he passed from the dock. On the following morning the whole batch of prisoners was brought before the Court, to which Baron Gurney had returned. Sanders, who had been acquitted the night before, now withdrew his plea in the case of Hunt, and pleaded guilty, but to the dismay of Barber the prosecution declined to proceed either with that case or the case of Burchard. It was in vain that Wilkins pressed them to go on, urging that his client had been anxious from the first to avail himself of the repeated assertions of Sanders that he could prove the former's innocence; and now

having pleaded guilty he was a competent witness. The prosecutors were inexorable. The prisoners were then called on, and for an hour and a half, in a speech characterised by the greatest fluency, firmness, and coolness, Barber laid his case before his judges, setting out the facts from the commencement of his acquaintance with Fletcher, to whom he made a final appeal to exculpate him. Alas! the speech came too late; delivered earlier in the case, it could not have failed to have produced a marked effect upon the jury; now, it fell upon deaf ears. Fletcher stammered out a few words, in which he asserted that he had been deceived throughout by Christmas; and then Gurney proceeded to pass sentence. The women were condemned to two years' imprisonment; Sanders to transportation for seven years, Fletcher and Barber for life.

Some weeks elapsed between the trial and the sailing of the convict ships, during which time Barber made every effort to obtain a reconsideration of his case, but the view taken of his guilt by the authorities was not to be shaken. One would have thought, however, that there were circumstances connected with the trial which might have made them pause. The confession of Mrs. Dorey, while fixing the guilt irrevocably on Fletcher, had contained nothing to incriminate Barber, and a portion of it, which, as relating only to the case of Burchard, did not get before the jury, had shown the booty divided amongst the other confederates without any share being allotted to Barber. She had, moreover, declared his innocence after her arrest, and Sanders, while awaiting trial, had said before several of the officers, 'I am a guilty man, but there is one here who is as innocent as a child unborn, and that is Mr. Barber.' When on board the *Lord Auckland* and still in the Thames, he had drawn up and signed a declaration to the like effect.

In addition to this, Fletcher himself made a solemn confession on June 28th, that Barber 'had no guilty knowledge that the will of Anne Slack was a forgery, or that it was otherwise than a legitimate matter of business.' Just before the vessel sailed, he drew up a lengthy statement which appeared in the 'Times' of July 4th, when both he and his fellow-sufferers were on their way over-seas. The declarations of convicted prisoners are justly regarded with suspicion when tending to exculpate those who have been found guilty with themselves; but there was much in Fletcher's story which gave consistency to the account from which Barber had never varied.

Take the following extract :—

To the best of my knowledge and belief, Mr. Barber had no share in the proceeds of the above transactions beyond his professional remuneration. I should also state that he has been concerned for me as my solicitor generally, and that I had employed him to negotiate terms with several parties whom I had traced out as the true owners of unclaimed dividends, and who were put in possession of such property. He had, therefore, no reason to suspect, as far as I know, that the cases for which he has been prosecuted were in the slightest degree irregular or improper. . . . *If the application made by Barber to be tried separately, so that he might have elicited the whole truth by calling myself and the other parties, had not been resisted by the prosecution, he must have been not only acquitted, but exonerated from the slightest culpability.*

The horrors of the ‘middle passage’ in a convict ship are happily only known to the present generation by tradition, though some hoary-headed criminals who have undergone them still survive. The destination was Norfolk Island, the nethermost hell of those infernal regions, and there Barber, Fletcher, and Sanders found themselves established. Some mitigations were usually obtainable for men of education in the shape of clerkships and employment as domestic servants, and it would have been thought that Barber, acute, cultivated, and apt in every department of business, would have been a meet subject for any clemency compatible with the stern discipline of the island. Far from it; he had committed an unpardonable sin, he reiterated his innocence; and while Fletcher was established in a comfortable billet, he was treated with every rigour that brutality could inflict. It makes the blood boil to read that this quiet, refined gentleman was herded with the worst desperadoes in the road-making gangs, and, as a variant, employed in the loathsome occupation of cleaning out the dormitories, subjected all the while to insult and provocation which excited the indignation of the officials themselves. Still, with stubborn endurance he laboured on; a violent attack of dysentery, the direct consequence of his ill-treatment, drove him to the hospital, where, sheltered from his persecutors, he was enabled to draw up a memorial to the Home Government, but it produced no effect, if indeed it ever reached its destination, and his state seemed more hopeless than ever.

Meanwhile, however, interest had been excited amongst the more humane of the officers, civil and military. The confessions of Fletcher and Sanders had become known. The former was carefully examined by competent persons, and his testimony was strengthened by the evident animosity he still cherished against Barber, whose action in calling him as a witness at the Mansion

House had, as he maintained, brought about his detection. The chaplain, Mr. Beagley Naylor, wrote in strong terms to Sir Robert Peel and Lord Stanley, but his letters were stopped at Hobart Town, and the result was to heap fresh trouble upon Barber. All the documents confirmatory of his innocence were seized by order of the Governor-Commandant, the use of pen and ink was denied and the severest labour imposed. But this was the last straw, and early in 1846 Mr. Naylor actually took the step of despatching his wife to England armed with a copy of Barber's memorial and evidence in support of it. Thanks to this, pardon was granted conditional upon his not returning to England. In April 1847, once more a free man, he started on his homeward journey.

The rest of the tale must be very briefly told. Both at Sydney and Madras his story was sifted by the leading members of the legal profession, who reported unanimously in favour of his innocence, and helped his poverty by generous contributions. Arrived in Paris, our Ambassador, Lord Normanby, interested himself strongly in the case, with such effect that on November 3, 1848, a free and unconditional pardon was obtained, accompanied by a letter from Sir George Cornewall Lewis, stating that the Home Secretary, Sir George Grey, was convinced that Mr. Barber had been free from any guilty participation in the frauds of which he was made the instrument. In addition to this, eight members of the convicting jury signed a declaration that if the evidence contained in the confessions of the other prisoners, and the facts which had since transpired, had been presented to them at the trial, they would have acquitted Barber, and that the failure of justice arose in their opinion from his not having had a separate trial.

Even after these acknowledgments his troubles were not over. The Incorporated Law Society opposed the application to renew his certificate as an attorney, and time after time the Queen's Bench upheld their contention on the ground that the facts disclosed proofs of Barber's complicity with Fletcher. Yet his efforts and the assiduity of his supporters at the Bar and on the Press never flagged. Bit by bit, and often from unexpected quarters, additional evidence came to light, and at last, on November 21, 1855, Lord Campbell 'yielding,' as has been said recently, 'to the pathetic importunity of Serjeant Wilkins,' restored him, after an interval of twelve years, to the full practice of his profession.

J. B. ATLAY.

THE SENSE OF HUMOUR IN MEN.

It is asserted—indeed, it has become an accepted axiom—that women have no sense of humour. This, of course, implies that men have a sense of humour, and the implied axiom is accepted with the same unquestioning meekness as the explicit one.

It is a controversy that can never be settled; in which each individual generalises from the few instances that happen to have come under his or her immediate notice; a controversy in which every human being is necessarily biassed on one side or the other; and in which the vital question, ‘What is humour?’ can never so much as begin to be answered. ‘What is humour? Why, something that amuses me, and must be carefully distinguished from what amuses A and B, who have no sense of humour.’ This is the settlement frequently made, though not expressed exactly as above, and it is not to be upset by all the canons of all the critics in the world. It is as hard to say what is humorous as to say what is pleasant. *De gustibus non est disputandum*; there are points on which no one is in a position to lay down the law.

When, however, the law is laid down on these points, we have all a right to remonstrate. Especially when it takes the childlike form, ‘We have gifts, but you have not,’ a sense of humour should suggest that the statement requires at least support. There has been a good deal of law laid down of late on women’s sense of humour or their want of it, and when they are said by some men—by no means all men—to have none, some burden of proof would seem to lie on the authors of this sweeping assertion of their own superiority. We know, though we do not always say, that the indictment, ‘She cannot see a joke,’ does occasionally mean ‘She does not laugh at my jokes,’ or, at least, ‘She does not laugh at the jokes that amuse me.’ We think it is largely on such grounds that women have been convicted of a want of humour, and no doubt the want does exist somewhere; but it is worth pointing out that, though the want may be in ‘her,’ it is quite as possible that it may be in the complainant.

Humour is a subtle gift, requiring a certain fineness and delicacy of touch. It is not, perhaps, assuming too much to say that these are admitted by men to be rather feminine than

masculine characteristics, and in the humour of women they are especially noticeable; we need look no further than George Eliot for an example. On the other hand, like many subtle endowments, it is more or less an educated quality. Peasant humour often amounts to little more than shrewdness; the point of the odd sayings of children generally lies in their ignorance of some familiar fact. In both cases the humour is more or less unconscious, and is appreciated more by an educated audience than by the speaker. Where the man is better educated than the woman, which is not so universally the case as it used to be, his education probably gives him this among other advantages.

There is, however, beyond doubt a class of joke which amuses men and does not amuse women. The question still remains—it is apt to be either begged or overlooked—Are these jokes as good as men think them, or as poor as women think them? For, after all, women are more than half the race, and the woman's opinion that the joke is poor is quite as good as the man's opinion that she does not appreciate it.

It is noticeable that in telling a good story some people are quite content to give the outline of the incident, expecting to raise a laugh by that alone, and not unfrequently succeeding. The essence of the joke, to them, lies in what happened. Others are amused less by the incident itself than by the manner of telling it, and are not satisfied unless able to reproduce the exact turns of language as they were given. Humour of this kind lies in the manner rather than the matter, and defies analysis; a statement made in one way may be incapable of raising a smile; made in another way it may be irresistible; and the transposition of a word or two may make the difference.

Now, that species of humour sometimes described as 'rollicking,' which men complain that women cannot see, is often more or less in the nature of the practical joke; that is to say, it lies in the matter rather than the manner. It appears, for instance, in much (by no means all) of the humour of *Pickwick*, or in the farcical situations on which the dramatists of the Restoration rely so largely, strong as they are also in humour of a different kind. The point, if we must say so, is not unfrequently supplied by the fact that some one is exhibited in a more or less undignified position. It may be freely and at once conceded that women are not amused by humour of this class. They think it silly, undignified, and often coarse; and, so far as the last indictment is concerned, men do not contradict them. More than this, such jokes, like

the practical jokes that amuse a boy, are often enough not only coarse, but cruel, and it may very well be that a woman refrains from laughing at them, not so much because her perceptions are dull in one direction as because they are keen in another. To see a human being made a fool of is too painful to be amusing. Moreover, she often finds that the joke consists in some time-honoured witticism against her own sex, supported rather by tradition than by observation, and if she has any spirit she naturally resents it. It is a curious evidence of the strength of custom, by-the-bye, this *naïveté* with which women are expected to join in jokes against themselves 'by men,' as has been well said in a different connection, 'incapable of a deliberate insult.' But because a woman does not laugh, it does not always follow that she does not see what she is expected to laugh at. A brother once complained of his sister that she could not see a joke, and the criticism was of course duly conveyed to her. 'No, I don't see any joke,' was the reply. 'There isn't any joke. *I see what amuses him*, but you don't really expect me to laugh at that?'

Still, it will be as well to admit that on the whole men have a stronger, or, at all events, a more inclusive sense of humour than women, just as men have a stronger physique, and for much the same reasons. That is, the sense of humour in men is cultivated and fostered, whilst in women it is frequently suppressed, either by their friends or by themselves, on a kind of general principle that women ought to have less freedom than men. Especially do we notice this in the case of religious or improper jokes, at which even a bishop, being a man, is allowed to laugh, but the laugh of a woman seems to imply profanity or want of modesty. This may then be one cause—the sense of the danger of impropriety leading them to desire to be on the safe side. Another reason is to be found in the fact that the daily life of men is more amusing than that of women; they range with their peers and crack their jokes, and so keep their sense of humour exercised, as it were, whilst women, ranging for the most part with children and servants, have little scope for the exercise of their wit, and the faculty dies out for want of use.

What are the most common forms in which the humour of men displays itself? Will any one deny that they consist of rudeness—we have only to recall the repartees of Dr. Johnson and the Very Reverend Dean Swift—coarseness, profanity, and practical joking? Under the head of coarseness we would include what we have called improper jokes, and the never-failing subject of drink. In-

temperance itself hardly seems an amusing subject, yet every one knows that the mere word 'whiskey' is 'wont to set the table on a roar;' the mention of brandy-and-soda will always bring down the house; it has been stated on credible authority that there is a publication which keeps up its reputation for funniness (and it is a high one) on its skilful use of the word 'unsweetened,' which the initiated understand to mean gin; and any story relating to a drunken man is assumed to be funny from the simple fact of his being drunk. Of course there are many stories of drunken men which are humorous in themselves. But the point here is that, funny or not, a story about a drunken man is quite certain to be laughed at.

Another of these coarse forms of humour is the way in which many men speak of women in general, and especially of their wives; this leads to a peculiar flavour attaching to the word 'mother-in-law,' which almost as certainly ensures a jest's prosperity as the words we have mentioned above.

As to profanity, we all know it is the stock-in-trade of many men who would otherwise be dull dogs indeed; it consists in quoting the Scriptures—an easy feat, since they are familiar to most of us from childhood; in a peculiar intonation on the word 'parson;' and indirectly, because it implies collections in church at which you give as little as possible, in a waggish way of saying 'threepenny bit.'

On the subject of practical joking it is needless to enlarge. Sir Walter Besant seems to be of opinion that this expression of humour has died out, and probably, as civilisation has, in spite of appearances, made some progress during the last sixty years, it has somewhat sunk in importance; but we should hesitate to believe that it is extinct, and that there are no men left who would laugh if they saw a chair pulled from under the person who was about to sit down on it.

All this does not imply that men have no sense of humour; it is merely a protest against the assumption that because theirs is of a more inclusive nature, so to speak, enabling them to find amusement in what we may call more material forms of wit, they are therefore more gifted than women. Charles Lamb was a humourist, but Mary's jokes were quite as good. Carlyle was a humourist, but the testimony of contemporaries would lead us to believe that Jane Welsh Carlyle had also a very pretty wit. The Very Reverend Dean of whom mention has already been made says of Stella, 'All of us who had the happiness of her friendship

agreed unanimously that in an afternoon's or evening's conversation she never failed of delivering the best thing that was said in the company.'

Humour, or the want of it, will generally be found to run in families; if the men are amusing, so as a rule are the women; if the women are dull, so, but incomparably more so, are the men. It is a fact, however, and one which has doubtless led to much of the ready-made talk that we hear of the want of humour in women, that men with a strong sense of humour frequently marry wives in whom the faculty is really deficient. Why this should be so would be difficult to say, and indeed the only general answer which ought to be given to the question of why a particular man married a particular woman is one that was once given by a child oppressed by the sense of the metaphysical in the question *why* she did something—'There isn't a why.'

As an illustration of the complacency with which dull men accept the axiom, a naïve exhibition is made by a correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle* who covered himself with glory by repeating to a lady an utterly senseless story which he, having been warned, took care to laugh at, but which she, taking it on its merits, declined to see a point in. For the benefit of those who do not read the *Daily Chronicle*, the story may be briefly inserted here. At a dinner table a dish of salad was handed to a gentleman who, seizing two handfuls of it, rubbed it in his hair. A lady sitting next him asked him why he rubbed the salad in his hair. 'Bless my soul,' answered the gentleman, 'you don't mean to say it was salad; I thought it was spinach.' The author, or rather communicator, of this story regards it as an infallible test of humour, and of course no one cares to write himself down an ass; but is there not a story in Hans Andersen called 'The Emperor's New Clothes,' in which the emperor is offered some wonderful material which the seller assures him is invisible to the eyes of such persons as are either not fit for the office they hold, or are irredeemably stupid? The story goes on to say that the emperor had to pretend to see it, and so had all those concerned; imaginary clothes were made for him, and he wore them (in imagination) at a festival, every one pretending to see and admire, till at last an innocent child exclaimed, 'But he has got nothing on!' It is refreshing to see Mr. Barry Pain assuming the rôle of this artless infant, and boldly asserting that he cannot see the point of the story; thereby vindicating his right to lecture, if he likes, on the question of humour in women.

To speak of the humour which both men and women appreciate, there are exquisite little turns on every page of Fielding, Dickens, George Eliot, Jane Austen, Thackeray, every humourist who deserves the name. That part of *Tom Jones* which probably appeals most to Fielding's few women readers is to be found in the introductory chapters to the several books. Three women, at any rate, in the experience of the present writers have spoken of them with enthusiasm; and, owing partly, perhaps, to custom, partly to a wholesome antipathy to what is coarse, it is not very easy to find three women who have read the book at all. Mr. Partridge at the play, and Sir Roger de Coverley himself, might have been described in every feature without raising a smile, if not described by humourists. Even the Restoration playwrights combined real satire with boisterous horseplay, and the former survived through Sheridan and Goldsmith to the modern novelist, while the latter, tried by an improved standard of manners and morals, is now intolerable. Mrs. Macstinger amuses us, in her assault on Captain Cuttle at the Midshipman, not by what she does, but by the way in which Dickens describes her; the incident in itself is too farcical. Mrs. Glegg, addressing the packman 'in a loud voice, adapted to the moral, not the physical distance between them,' is altogether out of the region of farce. Humour of this class appeals both to men and women equally, as we venture to think, at any rate where their education has been equal. There is an old-time courtier mentioned by Carlyle, whose stuffed breeches came to grief through untimely contact with a nail, and consequent loss of sawdust. He lives in history, the seer informs us, by this incident, for no historian of his particular court has left him out. We venture to think that had the historians been women, he would have been forgotten long ago; and would it have been any great loss? After all, if one wants to see people look foolish, the desire can be gratified every day in the street.

To put the contention briefly, there is humour which women as a class do not appreciate; there is perhaps no humour which men as a class do not appreciate. Most humour appeals equally to both men and women. But to say that there are jokes which amuse men and do not amuse women is not to prove that those jokes are good; and—the assertion is bold, but we cannot refrain from making it—we believe that they belong as a matter of fact to the more primitive form of humour.

EDITH SLATER.

FRANCES H. FRESHFIELD.

A WEEKLY MIRACLE.

THE mediæval temper of mind from which we are so greatly removed still lives on in the East. There the faith which removes mountains still remains unfettered by criticism and analysis. There the unhesitating belief in what we call the impossible makes it in some measure become possible, just as it did for the saints of the middle ages in Italy and Spain. And whoever would be convinced of what power such a faith has in transforming the normal functions of the body should study the more extravagant sects of Mahommedanism. The following is an account of an ordinary weekly service of one of these sects, the Isawiyah, and will show how astonishing a power over the body the will and imagination may acquire.

The sect of the Isawiyah is hereditary. No one can become a member except by birth—a fact which may, *pace* Weismann, account to some extent for the peculiar powers possessed by its members. The sect originated in the early days of Mahommedanism among certain holy men who acquired immunity from the stings of poisonous reptiles; but it takes its name from a later saint, Sidi ben Isa, who gave the sect its present constitution and its sacred writings, and immensely extended the powers of immunity possessed by its members, discovering how to swallow broken glass, nails, prickly pears, leaves, and other apparently deadly things. The sect is found throughout Tunis and Algiers, and, as a rule, every member, or nearly every one, acquires the powers which have been transmitted from Sidi ben Isa and his follower. They are scattered all over the country, and even in small villages there is often a considerable congregation in the mosque belonging to the sect. They are not, as one might suppose, distinguished in any particular way from other Mahommedans. They are neither more nor less pious, and they pursue the same callings as their less gifted neighbours; but on any great occasion, such as the Bey's birthday, when a particularly auspicious influence is desired, the Isawiyah assemble and go through their terrible self-immolations.

But it is not only on great occasions that these 'peculiar

people' inflict on themselves injuries which would kill an ordinary man. Every Thursday night (Friday night, by the Mahomedan reckoning), in every little town or village where there is a group of the Isawiyah, a service is held for no other purpose than the demonstration of this miraculous power.

Everyone who stays in Tunis hears of these performances—not without signs of Western scepticism; and, consequently, when staying with an English resident at his country house, about forty miles from Tunis, I expressed a wish to be personally convinced of the truth of these accounts. Mr. — is one of those Englishmen whose temperament leads them to have a close sympathy with Oriental peoples—one to whom the hurry and competition and vulgarity of our civilisation are as distasteful as the innate dignity and aristocratic distinction of the Arab are worthy of respect and sympathy. In consequence, he is regarded by the inhabitants of Menzel Jemeel, near which his house lies, as a kind of patriarch, who will settle their disputes, who will mete out to them, according to their deserts, punishment, or counsel, or material assistance, and who will mediate between them and the often unintelligible authorities of the French protectorate. Among those who owed most to his kindness was a certain holy man, par excellence the holy man of the Isawiyah in the village, and the most noted performer of sacred music on the tambourine in all the country round. To him, accordingly, Mr. — mentioned his wish to bring a party of friends to the mosque next Thursday evening. As there were two ladies in our party, it was not altogether an easy thing even for him to obtain consent; but, the next day, while we were sitting in the garden, the holy man came up to us. He was a little, short, wiry man, about forty years old, with a look of rapt fixity in his eyes which I have only seen once before, and that was in an English socialist and esoteric Buddhist. He was dressed in a very rough and ill-fitting burnous of white and brown frieze. He kissed our hands, and then began to pour out to Mr. — a long history of his visions of the past night. The saint Sidi ben Isa had come to him in his sleep, it appeared, and said to him, 'Burra, burra, get along, get along at once to Mr. —!'—this with his arms thrown out violently, as though pushing a man away from him. 'Get along at once, and tell him that the saint knows all about him—that, although for certain reasons he wears the cloak of a false religion, his heart is true to the Prophet, and he, too, will inherit paradise. Go along, and

tell him that he and his friends will be welcome to the mosque of Sidi ben Isa.'

Accordingly, at seven that evening we drove down to the village. It was a warm winter night, with a blazing moon at the zenith—a moon which bathed everything in a haze of mellow turquoise green. The whitewashed mud walls of the village, which straggled up a bare hillside, shone with phosphorescent light, and, at the top of all, the domes and cupolas of a great mosque glowed pale green against the darker green of the sky. Now and then there flitted along the walls a deep indigo shadow, cast by some passing figure with pale, shrouded head and white burnous—itself almost invisible against the whitewashed walls. Only at rare intervals the dazzling brightness of the turquoise town was broken by the formless blot of a doorway or window, or the uncanny growth of huge prickly pears.

The mosque of the Isawiyah was not the big one which crowned the height, but a little squat-domed building on the outskirts of the village. Already round the door was gathered a crowd of solemn Arabs; we went through the doorway down into a little white moonlit courtyard, and from that, with a whispered hint from our host to suppress our sense of humour, down more steps into the mosque. The length of the building was at right angles to the doorway, opposite which was a small apse where seats were put for us. In this way we were cut off from any possibility of exit by the whole congregation, an arrangement which made us hope that the spirit might not work too mightily that night. From the low whitewashed domes hung coloured lamps of tawdry metal and glass. From end to end of the building sat cross-legged on the ground a double row of singers and musicians, and behind these stood the line of dancers on whom the chief burden of the ceremony fell. Seated as we were behind the musicians, we looked over their heads at the faces of the dancers. Between the second row of the musicians and the long line of dancers was left an open space in which at some distance apart stood two men whom I will call stewards; these neither danced nor sang, their duty was to remain impassive, the sole depositaries, as it were, of the standards of ordinary life. It was an office for which we felt grateful in the paroxysmal orgy that followed.

The light of the hanging lamps and of a row of candles placed between the singers on the floor threw a warm yellow glow on the dusky vaulted roof, which faded into gloom at either end. But the

dancers were in a blaze of light, and the line of white swathed figures, their red turbans and even their dark features cut a sharp ever-changing silhouette on the darkness of the aisle behind and the night sky seen through the open door. Dusky ochre, white, and red were the dominant tones of the whole, but among the elder men, who sang or merely looked on, were some rich gandaras of turquoise and pale green, others of violet, puce, and scarlet.

When everything was ready the music began. All Arab music is strange to European ears, but the Isawiyah has a system of religious inharmony of its own, in which the peculiar nasal discords of Arab music are exaggerated to an exasperating pitch, while the rhythm is as complex and as frenzied as the dance which it accompanies. The singers and musicians were mostly elderly men in whom the youthful ecstasies of self-immolation had given place to soberer and maturer joys. The tambourine was the only instrument, and as they played all sang words from the writings of Sidi ben Isa. I call it singing, but the tense and painful expressions of these elders, the corners of their mouths drawn down, the eyes screwed up to mere slits, and heads strained upwards, resembled that of a row of fierce animals serenading the moon in the desert rather than a church choir. The only exception was the holy man sitting just opposite to us, in whose face, beatified with the religious exercise, was reflected the light of a heavenly vision, unmarred for him by the fact that his private life, like that of some European saints, was not entirely free from reproach. Meanwhile the tambourines rattled incessantly with a dull wooden sound; the ictus of the rhythm was marked by the holy man's lifting his tambourine above his head with a sudden jerk and giving it a violent thump from below, while he gazed up at it as though its dirty parchment covered an imminent paradise.

As the music grew faster and more orgiastic the dancers became more and more violent. Standing shoulder to shoulder in a close-packed line, each grasped his neighbour's hand held rigidly down against the thigh. The basis of the dance, which continued with scarcely any intermission for the whole two hours of the service, was a rapid jiggling up and down of the line of dancers, the bodies being kept straight and stiff, and only the heads wagging limply from side to side with the movement. In the centre of the line stood the leader, the elected president of the sect, a handsome, finely built youth of about twenty, who had been engaged all day in making our host's new croquet-ground.

He it was who marked the changes in the dance by leaving the line, spinning round on his heels, and clapping his hands above his head. At a sign from him the whole line would bend their bodies forward till their heads nearly touched the ground with scarce a moment's pause in the interminable jig.

As the music rose to a crescendo, and the rhythm became more frantic and involved, the dancers got visibly more excited and less conscious of their surroundings, their eyes taking on a fixed and vacant expression. Then the leader of the dance applied what seemed to be the most effective and culminating intoxicant; at each ictus in the dance all the heads were strained forward and every one gave a deep staccato groan, like the roar of a wild beast, while the blood rushed to the head, and the muscles of the neck were strung like ropes under the strain. It was not long before this produced the result for which all were waiting. A man of about thirty, wiry and thin, with a small head, tore himself from the line of dancers and rushed up to one of the two stewards standing in the open space. The steward unwound his turban and held him for a moment in a fraternal embrace. With his turban the man seemed to have doffed most of his humanity; his small face, almost covered with black hair; his bristling whiskers; his blue shaven scalp, with the little pigtail of black hair flapping behind at every movement; above all, the lips stretched across his large white teeth, like those of a snarling dog, all gave the impression of something ultra-human—at once sublime and bestial.

Then bent nearly double, feeling with outstretched arms, blinded by his ecstasy, he groped his way down the open line between dancers and musicians to the other steward. This man held in one hand a large cloth filled with pieces of broken glass; one of these he took out and held in his right hand at arm's length. The ecstatic as he approached glared savagely at the glass, gnashed his teeth and stretched out his head; but he drew back; the religious intoxication was not quite complete, and some glimmerings of common-sense standards still struggled in his disordered brain. He rushed back to the first steward, was again embraced by him and again crept back along the line. Still the jagged shining glass was too terrible. Backwards and forwards he went, sometimes groping along slowly, sometimes with the stealthy rush of a tiger stalking its prey. At last, when the eager gesture of his outstretched neck made it clear that no vestige of reluctance remained, the steward clapped the glass into his mouth and held his hand over it for a

second. The devotee rushed back, as it were for consolation, to the first steward and held him in a tight embrace. For some time he remained so, making strange incoherent gestures with his arms, while the steward, gradually lifting up his head, proceeded to massage his face and throat; when his head was raised the man was still chewing and swallowing the horrible mouthful. After he had recovered himself somewhat his turban was wound round his head and he was lifted and shoved back into the line of dancers, where he went on jiggling up and down, his head falling now on one shoulder now on the other with a blank listless look in his face.

After this first example of frenzied devotion the spell of fear seemed to be broken, and one after another the dancers left the line (the dance never ceasing for an instant, and the music keeping up its maddening din) and rushed at the steward who held the glass and dealt out piece after piece. Soon even the boys took part in it, and one handsome fellow of sixteen came up and stretched out towards the jagged morsel, as though it was for him the bread of life. For the most part, too, they seemed to chew and swallow it with increasing ease, and the first steward had little to do but wind on their turbans and put them back into the line of dancers. Then the man who had first eaten, and who had meanwhile recovered his tone, came back for a second, and a little while after for a third, mouthful; but the frenzy was increasing upon him, and he had to be held by three or four Arabs, who rushed up from the sides to help the steward. It became a football scrimmage, and the four men had to put out all their strength to collar and throw him. Finally he was held down on the floor in a sort of epileptic fit, throwing his limbs about wildly, and literally barking like a huge dog. The divine ecstasy was too much for him and he had become a savage beast. Nor was he the only one who became unmanageable under the intoxicating influences of dance and music. Sometimes, it is true, when a devotee was exceeding the usual bounds, his growing excitement could be instantly assuaged by a few words from the writings of the saint whispered into his ear by the steward; but in spite of this several broke loose, and one in especial alarmed us by making his way round the mosque towards our party. Fortunately, he was thrown and sat upon by assistants before he reached us, as it is supposed that an Isawiyah will tear women in pieces when too powerfully worked upon by the divine influence. When the

service was over and the mosque gradually emptied we saw three or four of these victims of the divine frenzy lying about on the floor, by that time quite calm and exhausted and only groaning and barking fitfully.

Meanwhile the glass-eating went on more and more rapidly. At its height, a little boy about four years old was lifted up to partake of the terrible sacrament. One of the strangest things about the Isawiyah is that, while some of them never have the power of eating glass or doing any of the injurious things that the sect indulge in, others have this special power almost from birth;¹ nor does any stigma I believe attach to the inability, nor any special glory to the ability, to perform these wonders; it is regarded as a gift which one may or may not have according to the accidents of heredity, and its exercise is for the glory of the saint and does not make in any way for personal advantage. Indeed, as far as I could gather, there is no connection between these violent religious experiences and morality. They do not in any way modify the conduct of ordinary life, nor are they expected to. Our holy man, for instance, had earned much disapproval for some sharp practice in winning the hand of a rich widow; but this in no way affected his religious reputation. Neither was there anything in the service calculated to bring about a special attitude of mind—the transition to the state of spiritual exaltation was made directly by physical means, and not, as in the case of more mystic religions, by mental and moral preparation.

Finally, the glass-eating came to an abrupt end, and that in a curious way. A peculiarly fierce-looking and athletic Arab, who had for some time been developing more and more religious frenzy, and had eaten glass once or twice without diminishing his desire for it in the least, sprang at the steward—who resisted in vain—seized the cloth in both hands, buried his face in it, and munched up the remainder.

And now the other wonders began: first, a number of carpenter's nails, at least three inches long, were handed to the steward, and a demure little man stepped forward. He did not

¹ I afterwards met a Frenchman, who told me he had seen at Constantine the initiation of some babies into the art of self-immolation. He said they were shaken violently until all signs of life had disappeared, and were then cut with swords and knives. Even with these very youthful neophytes no trace of blood followed the infliction of the wounds.

belong to the athletic and savage type of the majority; he was quiet and domestic, a man whom in Europe one would have ascribed to the class of small shopkeepers; but he had a look of calm contentment, a conviction of divine peace in his soul, which contrasted with the purblind excitement of the others. Nor was his ordeal a less trying one than that of glass-eating. He stood quite still, held his head back and swallowed three of the large iron nails, heads and all, as they were put into his mouth one after another by the steward. Then he retired, and two men came in with a burnous full of prickly-pear leaves. The prickly pear as one sees it in the south of Europe is a sufficiently formidable plant, but in North Africa it grows to far larger proportions—the leaves, or rather the flat leaf-like stems, grow to nearly twice the size that they do even in Sicily, and the prickles are proportionately long and stubborn. Moreover, the prickle is slightly poisonous and leaves a festering wound. Consequently it seemed not the least miraculous event of the service when a dancer stripped to the waist, and taking a huge prickly-pear leaf in each hand, proceeded to rub them all over his naked body and shaven head, using them as one might use a loofah. There could be no mistake about it that he pressed them against his skin with all his might, and in the fury with which he did it, tore leaf after leaf in pieces and took a fresh one from the heap. Sometimes he would seize one leaf with both hands and scrub it backwards and forwards over his bare scalp, and finally eat the leaf with all its deadly prickles. Scored and scratched as his body must have been in every direction, there was scarcely a trace of blood. This was so also with the glass-eaters, who never bled at the mouth while they were chewing the glass, and shows, I think, that the bodily functions are modified under the influence of religious intoxication much in the same way as they are in extreme states of hypnotic sleep; that it is, in fact, a very curious case of auto-suggestion, and that these men not only did not feel pain, but that their bodies were not injured as they would have been had they attempted such things in cold blood.

Only one other wonder remained to be perpetrated, and this was the least remarkable, because it did not appear to be quite spontaneous. The presence of strangers made the Isawiyah anxious to make the service as impressive and convincing as possible, and so an Arab who happened to be absent was sent for. His special gift was to be able to cut himself with a sword, but

apparently he had had no intention of honouring the saint on this particular Thursday night. He was probably sitting at home smoking a pipe over his coffee when the unwelcome messenger arrived to tell him that it was his duty to come to the mosque and stick a sword into his stomach. He came, however, looking painfully matter of fact and sane among the frenzied worshippers. He stripped to the waist and, after waiting a short time to get some measure of ecstasy from his surroundings, performed a number of feats with a long-sword. He pressed the point against his stomach while the officer hammered the hilt with a piece of wood. Then, while the two ends of the sword were held firmly, he hung himself over the edge while two Arabs climbed up on to his back. The sword was handed to us to see afterwards; it was not really sharp, though by no means comfortably blunt; but I suspect that, although on certain occasions when the divine afflatus was upon him he might be able really to cut himself and suffer no harm, what we saw was only an imitation of his real performance, and that he was not by any means worked up into the state of madness necessary to do it with the abandonment and fury of the other performers. After this the dancing continued for a short while and then the service closed. The musicians, pouring with perspiration from two hours' incessant howling and tambourine playing, took long draughts of water from brass pots placed beside them on the floor. Gradually the mosque emptied of all but the prostrate forms on the ground, and we went through the white-washed courtyard out into the wide moonlit market-place. How healing was the silence of the night after that wild debauch of religious mania, how suave and serene was the great dome of sapphire sky and the moonlight falling on the white town like a benediction! Under its soothing influence the Arabs regained their normal state of imperturbable gravity. They crowded round our carriage as we drove off and wished us God's blessing with simple cordiality. We looked on them differently somehow now that we knew what fierce and paroxysmal passions were latent beneath their stately reserve.

Next morning I looked out of my window and saw the leader of the Isawiyah rolling our host's croquet ground as usual, and in the afternoon we went down to the village and met the swallower of nails and the prickly-pear man going about their business as though nothing had happened to upset them.

ROGER E. FRY.

SEA-SAUCE.

'SAUCE' is here used in its literal sense, although not as in connection with victuals. Nuttall gives as the definition, 'A mixture for improving the relish of food.' In this instance it is employed as showing the 'relish' of sport and fun, customary among seafaring men to 'mix' with the monotony of their everyday life. Maybe, one or two of the 'yarns' related in this article are not absolutely new to all the readers of 'Cornhill'; nevertheless, to him who perchance meets with an old acquaintance—or even friend—the writer would say, let him not turn his back upon that one, but rather greet him as befits the friendship, and note in what style of company he be found.

So far as the Royal Navy is concerned, the puerile practice of practical joking has died a natural death, after struggling in vain for life in such shapes as the 'cutting down' of hammocks, and other similar 'jokes' requiring an equally huge amount of brain-power to evolve. The ghost of this kind of jape still remains, in a very mild form, but generally confines its attention to the newly joined.

However, should anyone be anxious to meet with it, he has but to manage to sleep on board a man-of-war for a single night; when, if he can arrange that he shall snore, his awakening will be brought about by a bit of yellow soap melting between his extended jaws, and the frothing suds trickling gently down his noisy throttle. Among the 'hands,' however, a boot or some such handy missile is generally considered equally effective; the use of the soap—being of a more refined taste—is practically monopolised by the midshipmen and other gun-room officers.

Numerous stories are told of the escapades of these young 'sucking Nelsons,' perhaps one of the best being the following—the 'sauce' in this case, it will be seen, partaking of the *piquante* order. Its truth the writer can vouch for, having been in the Mediterranean Fleet at the time, and a shipmate of the 'hero' in later years.

It was in Malta harbour on a sultry day that a four-foot-eight midshipman came to join his first sea-going ship. Having duly reported himself to the captain—an officer of some six feet two inches—the latter, literally looking down upon the boy, said :

‘Well, youngster, so you’ve come to join—eh?’

‘Yes, if you please, sir,’ meekly responded the midshipman.

‘What is it—same old yarn, sent the fool of the family to sea—eh?’

‘No sir,’ ingenuously replied the youngster; ‘oh no, things have altered since your time, sir.’

‘Go away!’ roared the captain, and the middy flew below, as fast as his little legs could carry him.

Howbeit, all midshipmen are not so smart as this one; in fact, occasionally a veritably verdant specimen is met with. Of such was he who, when on his first voyage, was gruffly asked by a rather ancient specimen of the genus sub-lieutenant if he had brought his cocked-hat and sword on board with him. He appeared dumfounded while answering in the negative; upon which the ‘sub’ duly dilated upon the various pains and penalties attached to such barefaced neglect—hinting ominously at a court-martial. At length the youngster, acting on his senior’s advice, applied to the ship’s steward for the articles; when that official, with as solemn a countenance as he could command, assured him that he was ‘very sorry, but having just emptied the last cask of them, he would have no more to serve out until the ship reached Madeira.’ Perhaps it is scarcely necessary to add that cocked-hats and swords are not comprised in a midshipman’s outfit; moreover, this young fellow was an exception. And that this was the case may be gathered from the fact that, instead of continually asking leave to go ashore, he appeared to be so much in love with the scene of his duties, that at last the commander found it necessary to give orders ‘he should land at least twice a week’—this for his health’s sake.

Speaking of going ashore, there was once a midshipman who gained a standing invitation to the house of a resident at Southsea under somewhat peculiar circumstances. The ship was lying at Spithead, and it was his afternoon watch, when a shoreboat pulled alongside and a venerable-looking old gentleman ascended the accommodation ladder. Arrived on the quarter-deck, he asked if he might see over the ship. Being Thursday afternoon—a sort of half-holiday on board a man-of-war—the young officer said certainly, and, what is more, himself volunteered to act as cicerone.

Closely followed by the visitor, he first led the way aft on the quarter-deck, where he pointed out the wheel as being the one ‘we spin our yarns on’; then below to show ‘where the sergeant

of marines was buried' (referring to a jocular sea-myth), next through the dirtiest part of the vessel to the stokehold—laughing the while to see the old gentleman soiling his gloves—where he drew his visitor's attention to one of the great boilers that happened to be lighted up, assuring him it was 'the copper in which the ship's company's soup was cooked.'

After palming off many other equally hoary-headed though innocent jokes, he invited his charge into the gun-room, being particular to impress upon him that 'it was called the gun-room because there were no guns in it.' Invited to taste the ship's rum, the interested visitor acquiesced with avidity, the midshipman replenishing his glass more than twice. Some half-hour having elapsed without the anticipated intoxication making itself apparent, the young officer must needs substitute, for the good wholesome (if potent) spirit, gun-room sherry; and to those who have not experience of this vile compound, it is only necessary to say its age, and good qualities in general, are judged by the amount of 'bite' it possesses—in short, it is warranted to kill at a hundred yards. Nevertheless, the visitor drained several glasses of the stuff, if not with too apparent a relish, yet with a stolid intention not to sin against the laws of hospitality.

So it was that as, later on, the old gentleman walked soberly up on to the quarter-deck, the surprise of his host was only exceeded by his admiration for this fine display of the capacity for carrying liquid cargo. With many thanks and a hearty invitation to visit his house in Southsea whenever ashore, the visitor took his departure, leaving his card in the midshipman's hands, who, however, never gave it a glance, expecting every instant to see his late guest tip head foremost down the accommodation ladder.

But as the latter waved a smiling adieu from the boat, curiosity impelled him to ascertain the name of this extraordinary being, so 'green' in all appertaining to a ship, except the rum—in which he seemed 'well seasoned.' There, on the piece of paste-board, staring him in the face, was the legend, 'Admiral Sir ——, K.C.B.'

It speaks well for the good nature of this distinguished officer that, finding the midshipman did not call at his house as invited, he sent off a special message that he was to come to dinner—naming a certain evening. And, it may be added, this episode was the commencement of a friendship between the two officers, terminated only by the sad death of the genial old Admiral.

Referring again, however, to notable instances of verdancy displayed, the following may be mentioned. The followers of Isaak Walton on board a man-of-war are wont to ply the gentle art (with a line alone) from over the ship's side, during the evening. A sub-lieutenant who was not particularly liked by his junior messmates, was one day so engaged, when a midshipman, seeing the line depending from the 'chains' above, reached out of one of the main deck ports and gave it a couple of violent tugs, in imitation of a fish biting. Up the line was hauled with alacrity, but of course with no result. Once again the 'sub' essayed to catch this big fish that had given him so heavy a bite. This time the middy's plan was more elaborate; for, getting a companion to keep the necessary strain upon the upper portion, he hauled up the lower part of the fishing line and attached to the hooks an old shoe, an empty bottle, a holy-stone, and a sardine tin. Having carefully lowered these to the full extent of the line, he gave it a more powerful pull than ever, and the expectant fisherman above hauled in as fast as he could, hand over hand. But his language, when he discovered the nature of his 'catch,' is too much to ask even an unfortunate compositor to set up in cold type.

The above may be vulgarly (though aptly) described as a 'have'; of the following the reader may judge for himself. On board a certain ship there was an old quartermaster who, on account of his long service and his being an Irishman, was allowed privileges which would perforce have been condemned in others. It was about four bells, in the middle watch (2 A.M.), when this man came up on to the poop, carrying a lantern, and earnestly requested the navigating lieutenant to come and give his advice concerning a sheep (the only one remaining in the pen) which, he averred, was in a bad way—in point of fact was lambing under difficulties, and in great pain.

The officer readily accompanied him for'd on this errand of mercy, when the sailor, directing the rays of his lantern, displayed a fine healthy looking animal, which to all appearances gave no signs whatever of being in pain—nor of lambing either, for that matter. Himself taking the lantern, the lieutenant closely examined the sheep. Suddenly starting up, he turned upon the quartermaster, crying:

'What the dickens do you mean by this, Murphy? Why, it's a ram!'

'Sure, so it is, y'r honour!' exclaimed the man with a sly smile, and then, before the other could expostulate, hastily added, 'and—it's the First of April as well, sorr!' And so, indeed, it was—since midnight.

Murphy was given a glass of grog to close his lips; but the story leaked out notwithstanding, and the unfortunate officer for many a long day was pestered with inquiries as to the prospects of the lambing season.

But perhaps not the least amusing part of the joke, was the answer given by Murphy himself, when questioned afterwards as to the reason he had selected that particular officer:

'Well, sorr,' said he, 'you see it's like this: Mr. R—— is a married man.' This 'sauce' was pungent, as befits that commonly used with—lamb.

Everybody has heard, or read, of the pranks played by sailors (both officers and men) when 'crossing the line'; though such games are not very frequently practised nowadays in the Royal Navy. Indeed, so long ago as 1875, mercy to the uninitiated was the order of the day, the Admiral of the Flying Squadron even making it the subject of a general signal to his fleet, the words of which were, 'Spare the innocents.'

Of bluejackets themselves, the stories that could be told of their fun would fill half a dozen whole numbers of the CORNHILL, and then not be exhausted—but undoubtedly they would 'tell' far better than 'read.' Even the titles of their superiors is not a sacred subject among sailors; this essentially arising from their notorious inability to call a spade a spade, but rather 'an adjectival shovel.' The subjoined list may prove of interest.

The Admiral in command of a fleet the bluejacket calls 'the Ral'; the Captain—the Skipper, or 'the Old Man'; First Lieutenant—'Number One'; Gunnery Lieutenant—'Gunnery-Jack'; Navigating Lieutenant—the Master (the obsolete actual title); Chaplain—'Sky-pilot,' 'Devil-dodger,' 'Fire-escape'; Chief Engineer—the Chief; Paymaster—'Pusser' (from 'Purser,' the title in former days); Assistant-Paymaster, Clerks, &c.—'Ink-slingers,' 'Quill-drivers'; Surgeon—'Sawbones,' 'Pills,' 'Dock'; Gunner—'Wads'; Boatswain—'Pipes'; Carpenter—'Chippy,' 'Gate-maker,' 'Wood-spoiler'; Master-at-arms—'Jaundy' (? gendarme); Ship's corporals—'Crushers'; Marines—'Jollies.' The generic term for the bluejacket himself is 'Flatfoot,' or if an elderly man, 'Shellback.' 'Jack Tar' is a creation of the landsman, and, as

such, is never used in the Service. Although, perhaps, 'Jack' is admissible as in contradistinction to 'Tommy Atkins.'

The above terms are generally employed in preference to the more official titles; although in the following instance, perhaps it was the metaphysical nature of the argument itself that suggested the correct designation of the officers referred to. Two blue-jackets were once overheard arguing as to whom had the least work to do on board a man-of-war.

'It's the Parson,' said one.

'Ow d'ye make that out?' queried the other.

'Cos 'e's got no work to do, and all day to do it in.'

'You ain't *quite* got it, Bill,' retorted his friend, while an inspired grin illumined his features. 'It ain't the Parson, it's the Cap'n o' Marines.'

'Ow's that?'

'Well, as you say, the Parson's got no work to do, and all day to do it in; but the Cap'n o' Marines 'as nothin' to do and all day to do it in, *and* 'as a Lewtenit o' Marines to 'elp 'im to do it!'

Like many a cleverer man, Bill had mistaken a premise for a syllogism; consequently his opponent, building upon the hint given, constructed thereon an unanswerable argument.

When on shore on leave, it is to be feared that the bluejacket occasionally gets into trouble, although it is most usually owing to the shoals of land-sharks ever ready to help him spend his hard-earned pay, if not relieve him altogether of the trouble of so doing by appropriating it themselves. Landed on service, however, he shows up in a very different light, and the superior 'all-roundness' of his life's training to that of the soldier becomes more remarkable than ever.

Indeed, those in the sister service who were through the last Zulu war, have good cause to remember how, when a rent in their clothes needed repair, they, being unable themselves to use needle and thread, and being then unaccompanied by their wives, were forced to take the garment to a member of the Naval Brigade. And it may be noted that the latter, taking full advantage of the circumstances, were wont to charge somewhat 'stiff' prices for the exercise of their superior talents, acquired from long practice in the Royal Navy—every stitch of their own uniforms being of their own tailoring.

Nevertheless, throughout the campaign the 'soger' and the

'flatfoot' were excellently good friends. Notably was this the case between the Naval Brigade and the 3rd Buffs. Upon one occasion—on the way up to Ekowe—the latter were having rather a hot time of it upon the steep slope of a hill, when the Naval Brigade, fixing their swords, charged *up* the incline, and although greatly outnumbered succeeded in driving the savage enemy over the summit, afterwards calmly taking pot-shots at them as they wildly fled down the slope on the other side. They then re-formed and rejoined their soldier comrades 'at the double,' singing as they swung along, 'When Johnny comes marching home again, hurrah! hurrah!'

During this period it was a striking fact that, although several soldiers were punished for looting (farm-stock, &c.), not a single such case occurred among the sailors. But it must not be concluded from this that only those of the first-named service indulged in the practice. On the contrary, the bluejackets were undoubtedly the greater purloiners of poultry, but were also the more artful. It was their custom to sprinkle 'mealies' about the boundaries of the camp, until the fowls from the neighbouring farmstead would be enticed to stray. One manner of securing their booty is shown by the following incident.

A certain young soldier officer—ever jealous for his corps—being on camp duty one evening, determined that the guilt should no longer be saddled upon the soldier alone, to the exculpation of the greater offender. With this praiseworthy intention he secreted himself near the tents of the sailors. Presently he saw approaching a fine cock followed by a party of hens, picking up the grain scattered by a bluejacket, who, distributing a more than usually liberal supply close around the base of one of the tents, disappeared within. Not long after, the chanticleer, discovering this extra allowance, loudly called his wives and family about him, and they were soon lost to all but the enjoyment of so unwonted a treat.

At that moment, the flap of the tent was cautiously raised, and three bronzed arms were instantly shot out and as quickly withdrawn, each hand grasping by the legs one of the fowls. Amid the cackling and screaming of the hens, could be heard a hasty scuffling within the tent as the young subaltern quickly advanced, now assured of the success of his enterprise.

What was his astonishment when, on putting his head inside, he found one bluejacket seated upon some mealie-bags in the

centre, calmly smoking his pipe and busy sewing, while three other forms lay stretched and loudly snoring on the ground! Rousing them up, the young officer taxed the lot with looting. This, of course, the men strenuously denied, one and all, and upon the officer declaring he should report the matter to headquarters, would take no refusal but that the tent should then and there be searched. Despite remonstrances they set to work, and in a very short time every single thing was out on the grass, as they themselves stood to attention, stripped to the waist.

The booty still remaining undiscovered, there was nothing for it but to let the matter drop. This the young officer did, although to this day he is probably puzzling his brains as to how those birds so mysteriously disappeared.

Howbeit, there was roast fowl for dinner in *that* tent that evening; and this is how it was done. A fairly large round of turf had been neatly removed from the centre of the tent-covered ground, and a sufficiently large hole dug, and the earth disposed of. The birds on being captured were given an instantaneous wring of the neck, thrown pell-mell into this hole, the turf lid carefully replaced and straightway covered with the mealie-bags, on which our stolid friend the bluejacket then sat himself down, sewing and smoking.

Another example of the sailor carrying the spirit of fun even into the destruction of his enemies, was shown when the Fort had been duly established at Ekowe. Every morning would witness several of the telegraph poles having been pulled down during the night by the Zulus. At last a charge of gun-cotton, with detonator attached, was placed beneath the foundation of an outlying pole, a notice-board affixed giving warning of its dangerous character. That night the enemy, seeing the notice-board and not being able to read, concluded the embellishment signified that this pole was of more than ordinary importance to us; consequently some hundreds or so were busily engaged uprooting it when the charge exploded, blowing them literally to atoms. Ever afterwards, to render a telegraph pole absolutely safe from being even approached by a Zulu, it was but necessary to nail to it a board, with a few daubs of paint thereon, to indicate writing.

Of that deplorable incident of Majuba Hill, the most graphic of all descriptions was that given by a bluejacket, who, when his friends at home demanded an account of the *saute qui peut*, replied, 'Six blooming hours it took us to drag them there guns

up that 'ill, and comin' down I on'y touched ground twice—once on my 'ead and once on my stern !'

In distinct contrast to the above, was the flavour of the 'sauce' in the following case—here we find it somewhat unpalatable. Most readers will remember the sad loss, some years ago, of H.M.S. *Captain*, with all hands nearly. Shortly after the catastrophe, the *Monarch*—a vessel of a similar type—was lying alongside one of the jetties in Portsmouth dockyard, under orders to sail at 9 A.M. next day. In the morning it was observed that on her side was chalked in enormous letters, these ominous words: 'Mails for the *Captain* close here at 8 A.M.' During the night someone—evidently connected with the Service—had perpetrated this joke of questionable taste. The Admiralty offered a substantial reward for the identification of the culprit, but to this day he has remained undiscovered. But, as has been seen, this is not the vein of humour most common to the sailor. On the contrary, the majority of his jests being of so harmless and attractive a nature, become acceptable for those traits alone—the same qualities also compensating for any lack of intrinsic wit. Add to this the consummate good-nature which characterizes whatsoever he does or says—inclusive of japes—and we have the chief reason of the bluejacket being so great a favourite the world throughout.

If he takes his pleasure somewhat differently from his landsman brother, it must not be forgotten that, freed for a time from well-nigh the strictest discipline to which a man can be subjected, he feels like a boy let out from school, for an all too short holiday. Also, be it considered, good food, rude health, good pay, and an exuberance of high spirits, are not conditions calculated to turn out 'pet lambs.' And it is a fortunate thing indeed for our vast Empire that such tame creatures are not produced.

The British bluejacket may not possess all those qualities that go to make up a person of society manners and refined speech—such, for example, as a 'gentleman' in the 'first-class drapery' line; but to such as may carp or cavil (if there be any), a sufficient answer may be found in the manner he will behave and speak to any who dare question our right to 'rule the waves,' and so defend our Island Home. Then it will not be for him to greet the interloper with a smirk while saying, 'Step this way please'; but rather shall he draw his sword and cry, 'Stand off!'—and he'll do it.

STUART D. GORDON, Lieut. R.N.

A MISSIONARY OF THE FAR WEST.

BY ALEXANDER INNES SHAND.

'ONE of the most remarkable men in our country,' was the answer invariably expected by Martin Chuzzlewit when some notable fellow-traveller was pointed out to him. The makers of the mighty Union include many really remarkable men, and their memorials are scattered broadcast over the map of the States, from Maine and New York to the Gulf of Mexico. There are Washingtons, and Jeffersons, and Madisons, to commemorate soldiers and statesmen, as the progress of advance and annexation is indicated by forts bearing the names of fighting traders and colonels of cavalry between the Missouri and the Rio Grande. We may gauge the traditional renown of Kit Carson by the fact that he has bequeathed his name to sundry thriving cities in Michigan, Nevada, and Texas, to a river and to a lake, to say nothing of creeks and cañons. It is little, after that, that his name is engraved on a cenotaph at the township of Taos where he latterly resided, among the sturdy defenders of the Union in the Civil War. In fact, during his long and restless life his name was everywhere familiar as a household word in the Far West, and it was a spell to conjure with among the Utahs of the Rockies, and the Apaches and Comanches who raided the plains from fastnesses almost inaccessible in the Mexican Sierras. It is suggestive that the name he was always known by was Kit: no one ever dreamed of styling him Christopher. He was one of the most remarkable men of that country, not only because he was a thorough representative and type of the best and most intelligent of the fighting pioneers, but because he showed the range of his intuitive genius in a rare variety of aspects.

He is popularly known as one of the most daring of those wild mountain men who set laws, human and divine alike, at defiance, who hunted and trapped, carrying their lives in their hands, stalking and scalping the ruthless Indians, as they looked to be scalped themselves when their time came to be 'rubbed out' or 'go under.' Ruxton, in his picturesque 'Life in the Far West,' describes Kit as that paragon of mountaineers—'a devil incarnate in Indian fight, who had raised more hair from heads of Redskins

than any two men in the Western country.' Yet few men could have seemed less fitted for the desperate life to which he had taken instinctively as a duck to the water. He was slender of frame, gentle of speech, and mild in manner. Colonel Inman, in his recent work on 'The Old Santa Fé Trail'—to which, by the way, we confess our obligations—says he was under the middle size and decidedly delicate-looking. Yet all his frame was wire and whipcord; his nerves were of steel; he had an indomitable will and readiness of resource in emergencies which never failed him. But when he heard the war whoop of the savage, specially when on an errand of revenge, he bristled up like a wild cat; and the fervour of a fight with Redskins or a scrimmage with Mexicans after a fandango and a drinking bout, appeared to double his wiry strength. Mountain men of gigantic stature, who seemed long to have forgotten the sensation of fear, shrank from an encounter with Kit, and easily acknowledged him as their leader.

If that were all that could be said of him, we could only assign him the foremost place as pioneer, scout, and frontier fighter, the worthy successor of the Daniel Boones and Simon Kentons. But Kit, before his iron constitution was worn out, had figured in many characters and capacities, and distinguished himself in all. He made his way, by force of character, courage, and intellect, in face of obstacles as formidable as ever barred the American progress to the West. He shouldered the rifle and went on the trapping path as a mere boy, and decidedly his 'education was neglected.' But, shunning the snares that beset him on every side, though he became daring to recklessness, he was never brutalised like his comrades, who had little to distinguish them from the Indians save greater coolness and resource. He rose steadily from post to post, and in general consideration. From being the surest hunter, supplying the outlying garrisons with venison and buffalo meat, he came to be trusted as the most reliable of guides and sagacious of scouts. When a raid was contemplated into the Indian hunting grounds, Kit was fetched from any distance to guide the troopers. It was not only that he was familiar with each rood of the country, and could lead wagons through the intricate ravines of the watersheds by something approaching inspiration, and that the Indian sign was clear as print to him, but that he was versed in the nature and wiles of the savages, and had extraordinary influence with them to boot. They feared him, as, like other heathen, they were ready to worship the malevolent powers they

had reason to dread; but they had faith besides in his honour, and in a word that had never been broken. The commanders of the States troops, conscious of their responsibilities, and with their reputations at stake, consulted him and followed his counsels. Though poor at first, his honour was stainless, and no man believed him capable of selling a secret. His pay latterly was liberal, and, though free-handed enough, he could save. And saving among those mountain men, who prided themselves on squandering, and sought quarrels with any comrade who would not gamble and get drunk, says no little for Kit Carson's strength of will. As we shall sketch his career, suffice it to remark now that before he died he had been employed in much delicate diplomacy which averted bloody Indian wars; that he had virtually commanded in difficult operations of irregular war, by which decisive victories were won; that he had become the chosen friend and sleeping partner of by far the wealthiest rancher of the South-West; and that when the Civil War brought frontier heroes to the test of popular selection, Kit became colonel of one of the regiments of Texan volunteers. The face, as we see it in his portraits, is not specially attractive. After saying so much, we hesitate to add that it is very American. What we mean is that it strikes us as might a fancy portrait of Sam Slick. There is stern determination in forehead and chin, with a gleam of shrewd humour in the half-closed eyes, suggesting one who would get the better in a bargain unless you kept your eyes skinned. And undoubtedly Kit's subtlety in scouting and negotiation was on a par with his indomitable pluck.

The boy was born with the quicksilver in his veins which set steady frontiersmen with large families perpetually on the move in quest of the illusive land of promise—it was the restlessness that always broke out in fire, even in sluggish temperaments, at the sight of the passing wagons rolling prairiewards. But Kit's disposition was all fire; the dangers of the further West were only an additional attraction; and, tired already of shooting deer in the bottoms of the valleys, and turkeys on their roosts, he longed to disport himself in the boundless hunting grounds between the Missouri and the Rockies—to run the buffalo, to trap the beaver, and to play at hide and seek with the Red braves, where scalps and lives were the stakes.

He was born in Missouri State in 1809. From boyhood he had taken naturally to the rifle, and his thoughts had always

been turned to the West. To understand his strangely adventurous career one must glance at the condition of the Western wilderness in those days. The greater part was practically unknown. It had only been traversed here and there by parties of well-armed explorers, generally subsidised or employed by the competing fur companies. The dangers faced and surmounted by those bold spirits were almost incredible—from storms and floods, from shooting rapids in leaky canoes, from seeing their horses break down in the rugged cañons, and having to slaughter their perishing pack-mules to save themselves from starvation. Above all, there was the constant peril from Indians, who watched their progress and hung upon the march. Nightly the camps were guarded and the animals hobbled and picketed. But the approaches of the Indians were silent and stealthy: a wearied sentinel nodding on his post might mean the stampede of the beasts or the massacre of their masters. No man, when he lay down to rest on his buffalo robes, could be sure that he would ever awake again. The animosity between white man and red man was so inveterate and intense that it is hard to form even a conception of it. The frontier settlers regarded the savages as far worse than the great grey wolves of the prairie that preyed upon their flocks, for they backed up the ferocity of the wild beast with human sagacity and diabolical craft. They liked to kill, but they loved to torture; and, when they had leisure to indulge their grim native humour, death was preceded by refinements of cruelty. When time was more precious, having scalped the slain, the bodies were subjected to revolting mutilation. Consequently, and naturally, no quarter was given them; the mountain men, taking to the habit of 'raising hair,' prided themselves on the scalplocks which adorned their belts, and down in Mexico there were cases where the cowardly 'greasers'—so the Mexicans were designated by the mountain men—entrapped Apaches and Comanches under assurance of trade, and poisoned them wholesale at some feast or butchered them when intoxicated.

On the other hand, there was a good deal to be said for the savage from his own point of view. He lived by hunting, and nothing else—the nomad tribes knew nothing of agriculture—and the time had been, not long before, when he ranged the continent as lord and master. The white intruder had steadily forced him back beyond the Mississippi, and then beyond the Missouri. The seven nations which had formed a threatening

alliance to the North had been crushed in the conflict of French and English, when, as Pitt observed in his memorable declamation, we had called in the scalping-knife and the tomahawk to the aid of civilised warfare. Elsewhere he had given way, foot by foot, to the resistless pressure of the white encroachment. But still the boundless prairies had been left him, with the countless herds of buffalo, or bison, which were his cattle. And beyond these were the barriers of impracticable mountains, where the valleys and ravines swarmed with antelopes and deer, and each rushing stream with its brawling tributaries were peopled by settlements of the valuable beaver. The white men came, at first as skirmishers and by small squads; but the Indians were versed in oral history, and knew that these were the precursors of battalions. As a matter of vital policy they feared the invasion; but in the meantime they objected to the poaching on their preserves. Though the buffalo were in more than superabundance, the trespassers interfered with their periodical hunts. Those troubles had been at the bottom of the hereditary feuds between Sioux and Crees, Utahs and Blackfeet. But they had better cause for grievances with the newcomers; for it is a remarkable fact that the buffalo detested the presence of the whites. The red men might hunt them on their *branchos*, and they would merely move out of the way; but they actually deserted the grazing grounds which were regularly hunted by Americans. If they were to secure their future and escape starvation—some such fate as has befallen them in cramped reserves on short rations—there was nothing for it but to exterminate the strangers. In their raids and ambushes they only followed their traditional methods, though doubtless they followed them with more envenomed zest. The pioneers might have faced death and ruin in the way of business; but what stirred them to uncontrollable vindictiveness was the treatment to which the captured women were subjected. Each fresh outrage added fuel to the fire.

Meantime the Indian bands held the prairies which interposed between civilisation and the mountains, though here and there they were bridled by stockaded forts, garrisoned by companies of the regular army. In America, by the way, a subdivision of cavalry seems to be called a company, and not a troop. In these mountains lived the beaver the hunters went to trap, when beaver, before the invention of silk hats, fetched five or six dollars a plew at the trading forts. For the furs these adven-

turers habitually risked their scalps when they crossed the prairies to the Rockies, singly or in parties of three or four. There they camped and trapped for weeks or months in labyrinths of valleys and ravines familiar to the Indians from childhood. A thread of smoke, a chip of firewood floating down a stream, or even a scared water-hen or wild duck, was sufficient to betray them to men with an instinct for reading 'sign.' Many went westward, never to be heard of again; but it is a marvel how any man of them escaped, especially considering they went mounted, and had ponies or mules to carry pelt and traps. They were reduced, at times, to feed on roots, lizards, and rattlesnakes. Sometimes, it is said, they were driven to more horrible extremities; but somehow the most of them not only returned, but made a lucrative trade of it for many years, though almost invariably each season's profits were dissipated in one bout of deep drinking and reckless gambling.

That was the manner of life to which Kit Carson betook himself when, as a mere lad of seventeen, he engaged himself to a caravan of Sante Fé traders who were passing through Howard County *en route* to New Mexico. The raw recruit had soon an opportunity of proving his nerve and force of character. One of the party had accidentally shattered his arm, and the wounds began to mortify. Obviously life could only be saved by amputation. No one of the veterans would undertake to operate, when young Kit came forward to volunteer. His implements were a hand-saw and a blunt razor; he staunched the blood with an application of glowing iron, and the patient survived to thank the surgeon. The incident shows the risks of that roving life, when a man might slowly succumb to wounds or an accident, perishing miserably beyond reach of surgical aid.

The youth made his way to Bent's Fort, on the Arkansas, where he was engaged as hunter to supply the little garrison. Bent, by the way, was one of the best-known of the border worthies who have bequeathed their names to localities in these territories. Ruxton, on his ride through Mexico to the States, had enjoyed his hospitality before he died in the massacre of Taos; and thus he describes him in 'mountain-man talk,' when the trappers were gossiping round a camp fire within flight of Indian arrows:

'There was Bent's Indian traders up on Arkansas. Poor Bill Bent—them Spaniards made meat of him. He lost his topknot

to Taos. A "clean" man was Bill Bent as I ever know'd trade a robe or throw a buffler in his tracks. Old St. Vrain could knock the hind-right off him, though, when it came to shootin'. Both Bent and St. Vrain established forts; and Bill's, on the Arkansas, sixty miles below the famous Fontaine-qui-Bouille, was a regular halting-place of the Santa Fé caravans.'

There they were often delayed for days or weeks, when the river was down in flood. And there Carson remained for several years as professional hunter; for, besides the wayfarers who might be welcomed within the stockades, the fort was held by forty men. But in those days there was seldom difficulty in finding game. Deer swarmed in the willows and cotton-wood fringing the streams; in the season of the annual buffalo migration tongues and tender-loin were in superabundance, while meat could be jerked, or mixed up in pemmican, in any quantities for winter use. Kit became so renowned as a crack shot that he won the sobriquet, while still a lad, of 'The Nestor of the Rockies,' which shows that the frontier men had a certain classical culture, though their ideas might be somewhat mixed. He is said to have once killed five buffalo with four balls in a single run, for, ammunition having given out, he jumped off to cut his ball out of the fourth victim. Horsemanship and shooting came equally into play there. The first thing was to be mounted on a practised 'buffalo runner' that would range up alongside and wheel swiftly before the charge; the second, to send the ball home below the heart and behind the shoulder, where the lungs would be choked with sudden suffusion of blood; for a buffalo merely shot through the heart might gallop out of sight and recover.

The hunter, who had become a master in prairie and mountain craft, soon became equally celebrated as the surest of scouts and the most reliable of guides. When parties of settlers or squads of cavalry were acting against the Indians, his services were always in request. His profound acquaintance with Indian tactics and dodges made him worth any number of pickets or ordinary sentinels, and we know not that any party under his guidance was ever taken by surprise. When some startling atrocity was committed, if within reach, he was called in, for he was the Inspector Bucket or Maitre Lecocq of the prairies. And the episodes of his career unroll a panorama of life as it used to be in those parts—a life with an extraordinary variety of excitements. For example, an enterprising firm of speculators had taken to

running stage coaches from Independence, to the westward of St. Louis, to Santa Fé. The track ran through the raiding grounds and favourite ambushes of the Indians, and the travellers, who were their own escort, risked the chances of the road. But the Indians were also posted in the stage time-tables, which greatly facilitated their operations. On one occasion the coach actually drove into the arms of the noted White Wolf, with his Utah braves. The men were murdered and scalped; the coach was ransacked; the women, children, and arms were carried away. A search-party read the story on the spot in the wrecked coach, the corpses, and the foot-marks, and a regular pursuit was organised. Kit Carson swiftly followed up the traces to the place where the Utahs were encamped. With characteristic impetuosity the born guerilla charged into the camp, whooping out his war-cry. When he heard no crack of rifle behind, and did at length look over his shoulder, he saw that not one of his companions had followed. His case seemed desperate, but the accomplished horseman threw himself Indian fashion out of the saddle, and galloped back protected by his horse. The broncho had many arrows in the body, but the rider escaped unscathed. When he did rally his party and ride back into the camp, the Indians had had time to evacuate it, having previously butchered their captives.

He was always appealed to for any mission demanding unusual sagacity, coolness, and courage. In 1843, when the Santa Fé trade was most flourishing and lucrative, a rich Mexican caravan was in a grave dilemma. It was escorted by 100 armed Mexicans, and was protected besides by United States soldiers to the Mexican border. Beyond that, it must be left to its own devices; and between the frontier of the States and Santa Fé a body of hostile Texans was known to be looking out for it. The caravan was owned by General Armijo, one of the *ricos* and great cattle ranchers of New Mexico, who had lately been governor of the province. Kit was invited to take a message to the General, asking him to send troops to meet his convoy, and as the pay was liberal he acceded. It was easy for him to elude the concentrated Texan force; but the whole country was swarming with Utes on the war-path. Even Bill Bent at his fort blamed the foolhardiness of his friend; but, finding him resolute, he lent him his swiftest horse. Kit started, leading the horse, that he might save its strength in case of necessity. Passing within sight and hearing of sundry Indian encampments, he struck the trail to Taos,

which he reached in safety. Waiting there, he received an answer from Armijo, which he carried back to the caravan, having run the gauntlet of the wakeful enemy a second time.

Such ventures were on his own personal account, and many of similar character might be narrated. But in reality Kit took high rank as an explorer, for to him in great measure was due the success of Fremont's daring expedition. Fremont's story was a singularly romantic one. The 'Great Pathfinder,' as he was proudly called by his compatriots, when a young lieutenant in the topographical engineers, fell passionately in love with a girl of seventeen, the only child and heiress of a wealthy senator. The stern father used his influence to send Fremont on a dangerous expedition to the Des Monies River. Within a year he had come back triumphant to claim his bride. But as his father-in-law in prospective continued unrelenting, and planned new labours for him, he took the initiative himself. Having married the young lady secretly by way of preliminary, he proposed to undertake a geographical survey of the unexplored territories of the West. In 1842 he struck the route through the Rockies by the South Pass, which has been followed diligently since by hosts of gold-seekers. In 1843 he explored the sources of the Kansas River, crossed his South Pass and sighted the Salt Lake. Thence he struck northward to the head waters of the Columbia, and in the late autumn meditated a return. Entangled in deep snows in a desolate country almost devoid of game, death from cold and hunger was staring him in the face. As a last resource he resolved to retrace his steps; but the Indians, though friendly, refused to guide him. They declared that the mountains had never been passed at that season, and the attempt was simply impossible. Then Carson, his own staunch guide and companion, came to the rescue. He cheered his leader; he undertook to lead the forlorn party; and, thanks to his marvellous intuition for practicable paths, the expedition reached the Sacramento and the invaluable records were saved. It is said it had been reduced to such extremities that those who succumbed were the salvation of the survivors. Nor was Fremont ever backward in acknowledging the services of his guide.

When the Civil War had convulsed the States, Carson stood staunchly to the cause of the Union. The governor of New Mexico was a Secessionist, nominated by Floyd, the Secessionist Secretary of War. But the scattered settlers were for the most part devoted to the Union, and hastened to raise regiments of

volunteers. The officers in these cases were chosen by the men, and very characteristic these democratic elections were. There was vigorous canvassing, a deal of hard drinking, with much unmeaning profanity and many incidental fights. It was not etiquette for the candidates to canvass themselves; but they could safely leave it to their zealous agents. Naturally, the famous Indian fighters were brought to the front; and it was not unnatural that St. Vrain, always a man of position and substance, and held, as we have seen, in such high estimation by the trappers, should have been chosen a colonel. But Kit Carson, who had no education at all, and who had got his livelihood and put his pile together chiefly by rifle and traps, was elected to the second place. The hunter of Bent's Fort, the scout and mountain man, became Lieutenant-Colonel Christopher Carson. His talent for irregular strategy and tactics was by no means contemptible, and it is needless to say that, as far as sheer fighting went, he fully justified the selection. The ex-trapper afterwards, at the head of 300 horse and a muster of friendly Indians, led an expedition against the Kiowas, who had harassed and almost stopped the Santa Fé trade. He fought the savages for a long summer day: they made an obstinate resistance and repulsed repeated attacks. But, as the upshot, he destroyed their lodges, seized their goods, ill-gotten or otherwise, even down to their buffalo robes and cooking utensils, and assured the Santa Fé trail for long afterwards.

Born fighter as he was, he did still better service as a diplomatist. More than once he was despatched as envoy from the States garrisons, when tribes disputing the hunting grounds were on the brink of hostilities, and when it seemed likely that the regular troops would have to interpose in the quarrel. More than once his shrewdness and sincerity averted a bloody war. On one occasion, the formidable Sioux had encroached upon territory which was in the sphere of influence of the Arapahoes and Comanches. The latter, far inferior in numbers, sent messengers to Carson to ask his help. They said that, though the odds were greatly against them, they would fight it out if he took the command. He answered the summons in person without a moment's delay. Probably he was the only one of the warlike borderers who in the circumstances would have given pacific counsels. Certainly he was the only one of their mortal enemies to whom Indians on the war-path would have sent such a message. At that time, in a general way, the white and red men shot and scalped each

other at sight. But Carson, the sole exception to the rule, though he fringed his leggings with scalp-locks, was respected, and almost beloved. One reason is said to have been that he was not excessively devoted to the squaws, and seldom got entangled in cursory *amourettes*. Be that as it may, when he rode into the allied lodges he urged the warriors to treat, and offered himself as intermediary. Nor did he overrate his influence with the enemy. The Sioux received him hospitably, listened in solemn council to his words of wisdom, and, accepting an honourable peace, abandoned the ground they had encroached upon.

Latterly he had made his home in the valley of Taos, which may have been an eligible residence for a man of his habits, though scarcely the place to which a pacific citizen would have retired with his economies. Situated some eighty miles to the north of Santa Fé, it was raided periodically by Apaches, Comanches, and Utes. The western parts of it were regarded as a sort of preserve, where they could raise hair for a war jubilation when returning scalpless from a foray. The renowned name of Kit was in some sort a terror and a protection to his neighbours. He was always ready to saddle up and start in pursuit, with volunteers who willingly answered to his summons. But this singular character in his latter days had become a man of considerable substance. Even in his hot youth, though ever ready for a fight and a frolic, he had cultivated the virtue of prudence. As scout and hunter he had been liberally paid; and like some notable barristers, known to be all-powerful with juries, he had often been specially retained with fancy fees. He had saved, and had turned his attention to traffic and stock-raising. We are told that he was a sleeping partner with Lucien Maxwell, who had also in his beginnings been a trapper and hunter, but who, by bold speculations and a lucky marriage, became a capitalist and a great landowner. At all events these kindred spirits had become the closest of friends. Kit was always made at home in Maxwell's ranch, where that potentate, enriched by stock-breeding, corn-growing, and commissariat contracts, exercised arbitrary authority far and near, and offered hospitality indiscriminately to white men and Indians. Maxwell was ruined—paradoxical as it may seem—like Sutter of the Sacramento Mills, and other dollar-millionaires—by the Californian gold discoveries. Tempted into rash speculations, he died of his troubles and a broken heart. His friend Kit was more fortunate. Never having been either very poor or very

rich, living in the happy mean commended by King Lemuel, he experienced no such reverse of fortune. He died, as he would have wished to die, with his foot in the stirrup; for, when in the act of swinging himself into the saddle, an artery burst in his neck. He was interred with all honour at his home in Taos, and his memory, as we said, is commemorated on a cenotaph erected in the Plaza of Santa Fé. To the last the veteran, who had the chivalry of a soldier and the instincts of a highly bred gentleman, had preserved the rudeness of his early speech, with the picturesque phraseology he had picked up in the prairies. Doubtless his compatriots loved him none the less, and cherished his memory all the more fondly, that he always stuck to the buckskin and homespun, when he might have gone masquerading in broadcloth and fine linen.

AN ACTRESS'S TREASURES.

CHAPTER I.

THERE was breathless silence in the house as the curtain rose on the first act ; everyone was anxious to catch the first glimpse and hear the first words of Adrienne Delcourt, the beautiful actress who had taken Paris by storm two years ago, and who since then had enjoyed such unparalleled success. Every place in the theatre had been booked beforehand, so that the house was crowded.

It was a *matinée* given for the benefit of the widow and orphans of a certain well-known actor who had died suddenly, leaving his family almost penniless.

A performance had been arranged in the theatre to which he had belonged, and the celebrated actress, whose name alone always drew the house, had immediately offered her services.

After each of the first three acts there had been perfect storms of applause, and Adrienne Delcourt had been recalled time after time.

Just before the first scene of the fourth act, as she was resting for a few minutes in her dressing-room, a poor-looking woman knocked at the door, and on being asked her business she requested to see Mlle. Delcourt, as what she had to say was private.

The attendant was just about to refuse the woman admittance, but Adrienne had caught sight of the pale, eager face, and curious to know what could bring a poor woman there at such a moment, she called out, 'Let her in. I will see her.'

The woman entered, and now that, after all her scheming to gain admittance, she found herself in the presence of the celebrated actress with whom all Paris was charmed, she seemed to have suddenly been stricken dumb.

Perhaps the sight of the magnificent cream satin dress and the flash of the diamonds in the hair and on the neck of the exquisitely beautiful woman leaning languidly back on the soft silken cushions of a low easy chair, had helped to awe this poor, humbler sister, for she stood there in silence fumbling with a

note she had in her hand and with a poor little penny bunch of violets.

'What did you want with me, to make you come here at such a time as this, my good woman?' asked Adrienne.

'Oh, Madame, I know you will think it intrusive—but indeed—indeed I could not help it.'

'Well, but I only ask you what it is you want with me?' and Adrienne's curiosity was greatly roused, for she saw that the poor woman was evidently in great distress.

'It is my child. Oh, Madame, if it had not been for my child I would never have come.'

'But what can I do for your child?' asked Adrienne, more and more perplexed.

'She is dying, Madame—there is no hope; the doctor says it may be in a week or in a month, but—she cannot get well.'

'Oh. I am so sorry for you,' said Adrienne, getting up from her low chair, and then advancing to where the poor woman was standing, she held out her hand in token of sympathy.

The woman looked up at her gratefully with her wild haggard eyes so full of grief. Tears would no doubt have been a great relief to the heart-broken mother, but, alas! within the last two years she had had so much to suffer, so much misery to endure, that all tears had ceased to flow, and her grief was stony and desperate now.

She could not put her rough brown hand into the little dainty white one all sparkling with rings which the actress was holding out, and so she just slipped the letter and the little bunch of violets into it instead.

'But tell me what does it all mean?' asked Adrienne, wondering what tragedy she was now called upon to act in during the interval of her other play.

'It is from my child, Madame—the letter. I would never have ventured to be so bold but that she is dying, and she begged me, oh so hard, to do what she asked. If you could only have seen her with her cheeks so sunk and so ghastly pale—and then her eyes like living coals, praying me, yes, just praying me to come—you would understand, Madame. I had to do it, even at the risk of your having me turned out into the street.'

'But whatever made your little girl think of me, if she is so ill?'

'Well, you see, just two years ago, when you first began to

play here—my husband was living then—and on the child's birthday we brought her to see you. You were acting the same piece as to-day, and my little Andrée, who had never been inside a theatre before, just sat still and cried, for you see it was all real to her. Her father kept whispering to her that you were only acting; but it was no good, and when at the last, Madame, you stood there and pleaded for the two little children and said such beautiful things about the duty it is for parents to make the children's lives happy, and when you knelt down to the cruel husband who mistrusted you, and you begged and begged that the children's happiness might not be sacrificed, why the great tears just rolled down our little Andrée's face, and at last we had to go out with her.

'It was a queer treat for her birthday; but oh, Madame, if you only knew how you won that child's heart—how she has talked of you, dreamed of you, and how her one wish ever since has been to see you again.

'I have lost my husband since then, and I have had a terrible struggle to live, and poor little Andrée was always delicate, and the going without things has done her harm, until—well—there is no hope now, and all her cry is for you. It has driven me wild to refuse her the only thing she asks, and when, last week, a neighbour told her you were playing this piece to-day and what you were doing it for, why, her one thought ever since has been to send you a letter and some violets. I don't know what she has said in her letter, for she would write it and fasten it up herself, and then she cried and cried all the morning till I promised I would bring it; and to get to you, Madame, I had to pretend that you had told me to come to bring you something, because they would not let me through at the door of the theatre. I hope you'll forgive me; but you see a mother doesn't stop to think of anything else when her child is dying and asks her to do something. I would have gone through fire to stop her crying.'

Strangely moved was Adrienne at the thought of this poor child's admiration and appreciation. It seemed to her in its simple genuineness worth a thousand times more than the applause of the whole house such as she had had during this *matinée*.

'You were right, quite right to come,' she said; and then, fastening the tiny bunch of violets in her dress she said, 'Tell your little girl that I wore her violets when I went to plead for the children in the last act.'

Gratitude and joy brought the tears which grief refused to the poor mother's eyes, and she stood anxiously waiting while Adrienne opened the letter and read the few words which the poor dying child had traced in a large irregular round-hand :

'DEAR MADAME,—Will you please to come and see me, because I am very ill, and the doctor says I shall not get well, and I know I shall die soon, and so I want to see you so particular, and you were so fond of the children, and I *knew* you were good when they all said you were not, please to come.—ANDRÉE.'

Adrienne passed the letter to the poor mother, who was stupefied on reading her child's words.

'No wonder she did not want me to see it; why, I should never have given it you if I had known what she was asking you. Please don't think anything of it; it is just a sick child's fancy and nonsense.'

'Tell your little girl that I shall come,' said the beautiful actress, and there was a soft light in the dark eyes as they rested on the poor mother's pale, thin face.

'Oh no! Madame, you must not think of it—indeed you mustn't. My poor child did not know what she was asking.'

'I shall come,' repeated Adrienne firmly.

'But where we live—is not—not just like our home used to be when my husband was here. We have one room—an attic on the sixth floor, and such a wretched, narrow, winding staircase—and then such queer people living in the court. You *could* not come—indeed you could not.'

'Don't you trouble about that, but just give me the address and go and tell your little girl that I am coming—now—in my pretty dress, very much like the one she saw me in, and as soon as ever the play is over.'

'Oh, it is too good of you.' And the poor woman could now scarcely restrain the sobs which were nearly choking her.

'Write down the address; it must be time for me to go.'

The woman obeyed, and Adrienne put the paper safely away, and then smiled encouragingly: 'Never mind about your room,' she said. 'I am coming to see your little girl. Poor child, how glad I am she wrote!'

The curtain rose on the fourth act, and never certainly since Adrienne Delcourt had been on the stage had she played as she

did that night. When she pleaded for the children it seemed to her that up in the top gallery of the theatre she saw a little girl with tears streaming down her cheeks, listening to her every word, and believing in her, when no one else did.

It was the thought of this belief, this honest childish faith, and this genuine admiration and love, which seemed to put new soul, new life into the famous actress. There were not many dry eyes that night in the great assembly when Adrienne threw herself on her knees and pleaded that the happiness of the children might not be sacrificed.

CHAPTER II.

THE play was over and a group of Adrienne's admirers had gathered round her and were complimenting her on the triumph she had just had.

'You were superb in that last scene,' said M. de Trelat. 'Why, all the people were holding their breath.'

'Yes, indeed, the whole house was spell-bound,' said the Marquis de Duard.

'And then you looked——'

'Oh; don't pay me any compliments to-day,' said the beautiful woman somewhat wearily. 'The fact is I had just had an inspiration; I *felt* the part I was acting as I had never done before.'

A light came into Adrienne's eyes as she said this, and her friends, as they looked at her, wondered what had thus inspired her; but as she did not seem inclined to satisfy their curiosity no one ventured to ask for further information.

'It is rather hard on us, all the same, that we are not allowed to express our admiration,' persisted M. de Trelat.

'Well, but you see I happen to have had this afternoon the greatest compliment paid me that I have ever had in my life; consequently, I am afraid that it might turn my head to hear any more.'

The Marquis de Duard bit his lips with vexation as Adrienne made this confession with a half-serious half-laughing expression on her lovely face. He wondered to himself what new rival could have appeared on the scene and have had the luck to win the good graces of the season's star in this way.

Half an hour later Adrienne Delcourt was rolling along in a hired cab in the direction of one of the poorer parts of the City.

She had driven first to her dressmaker's in the Rue de la Paix and had then sent away her own carriage, as she did not wish to have her visit to the poor child gossiped about.

On arriving at the address which the mother had given her, she involuntarily drew her cloak closer around her and gathered up her dress carefully.

She found, too, that the house indicated was at the very end of a narrow passage which led into a sort of court, and Adrienne hurried on with a beating heart, wondering whether, in so low-looking a neighbourhood, she might not have some unpleasant adventure before arriving at her destination, an attic on the sixth floor reached by a dark, narrow, winding staircase.

She drew her skirts more closely still around her as she began to ascend, trying to prevent the rustling of her silk frills and flounces. She had not any gloves on, and remembering that her fingers were all covered with rings, she carefully kept her hands under her cloak lest the flash of diamonds might prove too strong a temptation for any of the poor inhabitants of the house whom she might happen to meet on her way up.

Very very thankful she felt on reaching the last flight to see a door at the top of the staircase open and reveal a faint light from some flickering candle.

A woman appeared at the door, and Adrienne, thinking she recognised her visitor of the afternoon, asked:

'Are you not the little Andrée's mother?'

'Oh, Madame, have you really come? I don't know how to thank you.'

'Then please don't try,' said the actress as she reached the top step, and then her cloak opening as she let down her dress the poor woman felt quite abashed by such a vision of magnificent splendour on the threshold of her wretched abode.

As soon as Adrienne entered the room, she was almost riveted to the spot by the intense expression in the eyes of a small child who was sitting up in bed and gazing eagerly at her.

Such a poor, little, thin, white face, with sunken cheeks and great dark circles under the eyes, but such eyes, they were indeed like two living coals at that moment, and it seemed to Adrienne as though the life in the poor little skeleton-like body were just concentrated in that one earnest look which the child gave her.

It was surely the last flickering flame of the burnt-out candle, and a pang of fear and remorse seized Adrienne, for it seemed to her that she ought not to have come. Such excitement as the child evidently felt might prove fatal to her when she was already so near the grave, and thus her visit might just hasten poor little Andrée's death.

'You see I have answered your letter by coming,' said the actress, trying to smile as she spoke, and then advancing towards the child she sat down on the edge of the bed.

'Ah! I *knew*—I *knew* you were good,' almost gasped little Andrée, still gazing intently at Adrienne.

'And I wonder what made you want to see me?' said the actress encouragingly, taking the poor, white, thin fingers in hers.

The child looked down at the beautiful, flashing rings, and then up again into Adrienne's face. It was as though she wanted to satisfy herself thoroughly about something she was not sure of, for there was a questioning look in her eyes, and then such an expression of longing as went straight to the heart of the actress.

'Mother, I want to speak to the lady—all by herself,' said the child pleadingly.

The poor woman, not knowing what strange whim had come to Andrée, hesitated, but Adrienne said quickly:

'Yes, please let us talk secrets just a few minutes; we won't be long,' and so the poor mother, looking very doubtful, went away.

As soon as the door closed the child leaned forward and said eagerly:

'I am going to die, you know, or I should not have written to you like that.'

'But I was glad to have a letter from you—and your violets too—I liked them better than all my bouquets. See here—I wore them,' and Adrienne threw back her cloak and showed the sick child the little bunch of violets pinned into the lace of her dress.

Andrée's eyes filled with tears, so proud was she to see her flowers worn by this great artist of whom all Paris talked.

'Please take your cloak off and let me see you,' she said, and then when Adrienne had taken it off the child just continued to gaze at her in mute admiration, whilst the tears which had gathered to her eyes rolled slowly down the poor pale cheeks.

'Won't you let us begin talking secrets?' asked Adrienne sitting down again on the bed and taking the child's hand once more in hers.

'Are you very rich?' asked Andrée in a whisper.

'Well, I have all I want,' replied Adrienne surprised at the directness of the question.

'Is it true that you acted to-day and did not have any money for it?'

'Yes, quite true; the money was for a poor woman who has lost her husband and who has three little children.'

'Yes; a neighbour that sits with me sometimes when mother is out told me last week, and I have thought about it every day.'

There was silence for a minute, and then the child continued in a very low voice almost choked with excitement and emotion:

'When I am dead, will you please act like that again just once for mother? My father was killed, saving a little boy from being run over, and afterwards they gave mother some money; but it didn't last long, and then I've cost her a good deal of money, and she works, oh, so hard! and sometimes even then she can't get us anything to eat, and you see, I can't sleep at night for thinking about what she's going to do for money. She won't have any even to bury me when I am dead. You see, when father was killed I heard them talk about it all; they didn't think I understood, but I did—and, oh please I *do* want a little grave all to myself with flowers on it. I don't want to be put in a big one with a lot of other people, it frightens me so—and I *do* want some flowers on it—but if all that costs too much, why I would rather be put in the big grave' (there was a quiver in the child's voice as she said this), 'and then give mother the money. You see it is dreadful to die and to know there is no one left to comfort her, and I heard you say that children ought to be happy, and that you would do everything to make a little child happy, and, please, this would make me so happy. And once I told our neighbour what you had said, and she laughed and said you did not mean it, and that you would not really do more than anyone else; but I knew you *did* mean it—for I *knew* you were good—'

The child stopped suddenly, for the beautiful actress had covered her face with her hands and was weeping.

Andrée was awe-struck at the effect of her words.

'Oh, please, please don't cry!' she begged, and then seeing tears falling on to the rich satin gown she whispered: 'Please, please don't. Oh, I wish I had not told you! What do you cry for? Please tell me!'

'For you, my child, my poor little Andrée; to think that when I have been gay and happy in the midst of all my beautiful things, you have been lying here crying, and all for the sake of a handful of money. Be at rest now, little one,' and the actress put her arms round the child and kissed the white forehead and the poor hollow cheeks. 'I promise you that if you do not live, if the doctor I shall send cannot cure you, you shall at any rate be buried in a little grave where we can plant flowers, and I will take care of your mother; I will look after her for your sake, child, as long as ever I live.'

'I *knew*! I *knew* you were good!' said Andrée with a sigh of content, and then, exhausted with excitement, she laid her head down on the pillow, but there was a peaceful look now in her eyes; a resigned, unearthly expression of utter and absolute content.

CHAPTER III.

THREE years later several of Adrienne Delcourt's intimate friends were assembled in the actress's luxuriously furnished *salon*.

Very glad indeed were they to welcome their favourite back after her tour in America and through nearly all the European capitals.

She had had wonderful success, and it was as though all the countries had vied with each other in paying honour to her superb talent and perfect beauty. She had played before most of the crowned heads of Europe, and she had returned to Paris laden with the trophies of her victories.

During these three years of travel it seemed as though she had surely grown more and more lovely, and as she sat there on a low cushioned armchair, the folds of her soft ivory velvet dinner dress falling gracefully round her, it would indeed have been difficult to imagine a more perfect picture of womanly beauty.

The conversation had naturally fallen on Adrienne's tour, and she had been telling of various experiences she had had, and comparing the manners, customs, and people she had met in the countries in which she had travelled.

They had been talking thus for more than an hour, when one of Adrienne's friends asked:

'Will you tell us now, out of all the pretty things you have had said to you, what has really given you the greatest pleasure?'

'Yes, yes, do tell us that,' begged nearly everyone present.

'Yes; and which of all the presents you received you prize the most,' added M. Gramont, a middle-aged, aristocratic-looking man.

'Do you mean during my tour, or throughout my career?' asked Adrienne, thoughtfully.

'Oh, throughout your career. But it is sure to be during your tour that you have had *the* compliments, and also *the* most valuable little souvenirs,' said the man who had suggested the idea.

'Yes, we poor mortals, alas! cannot compete with kings and queens, emperors and Czar,' remarked M. de Trelat regretfully.

'You must tell us honestly,' added someone else.

'Yes, yes—if I tell you, it shall be honestly; but I am considering whether I will tell you or not.'

A serious expression had come into the actress's eyes, which a few minutes before had been so bright and full of laughter.

The Marquis de Duard looked earnestly at her. He had gone purposely from Paris to many of the capitals where she had played, and just for a moment he had dared to hope that perhaps her hesitation now might be caused by—'But no!' he said to himself, 'when royalty competes there is no hope of that—any woman's head would be turned by all the admiration she has had.'

'If I tell you, will you all promise me faithfully to keep my preference a secret?' asked Adrienne, looking round at all her friends.

'Why, yes, of course we will,' they cried.

'And there are no journalists among us, are there?' she continued, smiling; 'for I shun them like the plague.'

'No, there is no journalist here.'

'Well, then, promise once more on your honour, every one of you, to keep my secret.'

'On our honour,' said every one; and then Adrienne pressed her finger on an electric bell.

When the footman came in she gave him instructions to fetch a certain red velvet jewellery case, and there was great curiosity felt by all her guests as to what wonderful work of art they were going to see.

When the red velvet box appeared, as it was not a very large one M. Gramont suggested that it contained perhaps a diamond pendant presented by the Czar.

'No,' said someone else, 'the box is too large for that; you may depend it contains some smaller cases with diamond necklace and pendant, and spray for the hair.'

There was dead silence as Adrienne, after unlocking the box, took out a little faded bunch of violets and held it up before her astonished guests.

There was something in the expression of her face that checked the jokes which had risen to their lips, and they waited for some explanation from her.

'You asked me what gift I prize most of any I have received during my career on the stage. This is it—this little bunch of violets,' she said quietly, as she laid the flowers back again. 'Do you want to know now what praise, or rather what words, have given me the most pleasure?'

There was a murmur of assent, and Adrienne took out a very common-looking yellow envelope, and, drawing from it a sheet of paper on which a few lines were written in a large, irregular round-hand, she passed it to her friends, saying, 'It is the last sentence that I prize.'

The words they read were these :

'DEAR MADAME,—Will you please to come and see me, because I am very ill, and the doctor says I shall not get well, and I know I shall die soon, and so I want to see you so particular, and you were so fond of the children, and I *knew* you were good when they all said you were not, please to come.—ANDRÉE.'

There was silence again amongst the worldly men and women assembled in Adrienne Delcourt's *salon*, until at last M. de Trelat asked quietly :

'And what did you do?'

'I went to see the child,' said Adrienne; and then very briefly she told the story, unconsciously adding to the pathos of it by the way in which she told it.

'And your "farewell night" before going on your tour—was it for this poor woman's sake you were so anxious for it to be a success?'

'Yes. I could not, of course, have asked my manager for a *matinée* for these people, as they had no claim on him, but when

I signed my contract promising to return to his theatre, I stipulated for that farewell night, and——'

'And what else?' asked one of her guests, for Adrienne had stopped.

'And that I should never again play that piece unless at my own request.'

'But it is your very best rôle—you are magnificent in that. I tell you that on your farewell night you would have moved a heart of stone.'

'Yes, but I owed all my power to that child. It was only the last time that I had ever played the piece like that. She had died a fortnight before my farewell night, and I chose that piece in memory of her. I had been to see her little grave that very afternoon, and in the last act in *her scene*, as I called it to myself, I nearly broke down altogether. As I pleaded there for the children it was of her I thought; the pity of it all came over me, and I pictured the poor fragile-looking little thing gazing at me with those eyes so full of grief, so full of anguish, as she pleaded to have *just a little grave to herself*.

'Think of a young child sobbing itself to sleep at night with the haunting dread of being buried with unknown people, and then beside that to think that its mother would probably die of starvation. No wonder I acted well that night. I felt as though I were pleading with the world for the happiness of all the little waifs of humanity who cry themselves to sleep at night.'

No one spoke for some time until the Marquis de Duard said:

'But do you really mean you will not play the piece again?'

'I don't know. It is three years ago now—all this—and I have not played it since, for I felt it would be like trading on my little Andrée's grief—my little champion who "*believed I was good when no one else did*."

The beautiful actress's eyes were wet with tears as she folded her treasured letter and replaced it in the red velvet box side by side with the little faded bunch of violets, which she valued more than all the flashing diamonds received from royal hands.

ALYS HALLARD.

THE BYE-WAYS OF JOURNALISM.

READERS of 'Bleak House' must be familiar with 'the two gentlemen not very neat about the cuffs and buttons' who flit across the crowded pages of that story of London life. They are first introduced at the inquest, held at the Sol's Arms, on the body of the mysterious old copying clerk. The beadle is very attentive to them; 'for they are,' writes Dickens, 'the public chroniclers of such inquiries by the line; and he is not superior to the universal human infirmity, but hopes to read in print what "Mooney, the active and intelligent beadle of the district," said and did.' They appear again when Mr. Krook dies of spontaneous combustion; and they write, the novelist tells us, with 'ravenous little pens on tissue paper' the horrifying particulars of that strange event. These humble workers in the bye-ways of journalism are known to-day, as in the days of Dickens, as 'penny-a-liners.'

It is, perhaps, unnecessary in these newspaper-reading days to explain what 'penny-a-lining' means. Most people know that 'penny-a-lining' is a system in journalism by which men who are not regularly attached to any newspaper send items of news—odds and ends of all kinds which they may chance to pick up—to several journals, which are paid for, if published, at the rate of a penny a line. But penny-a-lining is not quite an accurate expression nowadays, so far as London, at least, is concerned. Years ago, when the term was invented, the newspapers only paid a penny a line for items of news accepted from persons unattached to their regular staffs; but now three-halfpence and twopence a line are paid for such reports and paragraphs by the big Metropolitan 'dailies.' Indeed, 'penny-a-liner' has become an epithet of contempt in journalism. To call a journalist a 'penny-a-liner' is to insinuate that he belongs to the lowest and rather disreputable circles of the profession. This seems to be recognised outside the ranks of journalism also. It is only a short time ago that one of our most eminent statesmen stigmatised as 'a penny-a-liner' a well-known political journalist who was in the habit of attacking him in his newspaper; and, apparently, the eminent statesman conceived that by the application of that epithet he

had administered a terrible castigation to his adversary. 'Liner' is the name by which a member of this curious and interesting class of journalists is now known.

London is so vast in extent that none of the daily newspapers could possibly keep a regular staff of reporters large enough to cover everything of public interest which occurs within its borders, and sub-editors—or the news editors, as they are sometimes called—are therefore very glad to avail themselves of the services of these vigilant 'liners,' who are to be found in all parts of the mighty Metropolis, ever on the look-out for material for a paragraph or a report. They are always on the prowl after accidents, fires, burglaries, and murders; they haunt the great hospitals, the central police stations, and the stations of the Fire Brigade. They are a curious body of men, indeed. Most of them, perhaps, are poorly educated and unambitious, but some of them are able men—men even of University education—who have had tragic experience of the ups and downs of a journalist's life; men who have held important positions on the staffs of our best newspapers, and who for some reason have failed; and, indeed, it is not too much to say that among the 'liners' with which Fleet Street—the greatest newspaper thoroughfare in the world—is swarming will be found more sad failures, more ruined reputations, more crushed ambitions than in any other walk of life. Many are reputable, some are disreputable. The majority of them are induced by the nature of their occupation to look upon life as a comedy, a farce, and when a tragedy comes their way their only thought is the number of lines they can spin out of it, and the pounds and shillings it will bring in. An old journalist friend showed me a curious and amusing account which was sent to a newspaper he was connected with by one of these gentlemen. It ran

THE 'MORNING MERCURY.'

To S. W. Clacton, *Dr.*

	s.	d.
For Atrocious Murder in Bigley Street, S.E.	4	2
Burning of Brewster's factory, Mile End	2	3
Sinking of a Thames passenger steamer	3	2
Dreadful Shipping Conflagration at the Docks	6	1
Poisoning of the Macklin family, Drury Lane	2	6

And so on. One would have imagined that this desperate ruffian, S. W. Clacton, had for the small sum of 2s. 6d.—to take only one item of the account—poisoned an unfortunate family in Drury

Lane. But, happily, he was not so bad as that. The amounts set forth in the account were the payments due to S. W. Clacton for his paragraphs describing those conflagrations and murders, at the rate of a penny, three-halfpence, or twopence a line. Some poet has thus sung of the 'liner':—

A house afire is breakfast, and a storm
Serves for a luncheon; murder is his dinner—
Welcome to him is crime in every form.
Woe and misfortune clothe and feed the sinner.
Thieves, scoundrels, knaves find morsels for his jaws;
And, as effect fast follows after cause,
He grows the fine original he draws.

The last lines of the verse are, I think, a little too rough on the 'liner.' I never heard of one of the fraternity in London committing a murder or setting fire to a factory in order to make a paragraph, though some years ago a newspaper correspondent in the West of Ireland was sent to penal servitude for a series of outrages—such as burning hay-ricks and maiming cattle—which he himself committed, and then telegraphed the harrowing details to various journals.

There are stories told of these journalists which aptly illustrate their common habit of regarding every event from the standpoint of their own special work. One of them coming home one night discovered a man insensible at his threshold, and with great presence of mind, without losing a moment, he called out to his wife, 'Quick, my dear, bring a light; here's a paragraph lying on the door-steps!' As another 'liner' was walking along the quays of Dublin a man rushed past him and jumped over the wall into the Liffey. The journalist immediately looked at his watch. 'How provoking!' he exclaimed. 'It's six o'clock and I'm too late for the last edition of the "Evening Mail,"' and addressing the suicide struggling in the water, he added, 'All right, my boy; I'll give you a good paragraph in the morning papers.'

'Lining' is on the whole a precarious employment. Some 'liners' manage to make a fairly good income, but most of them only eke out a miserable existence. There are, it is true, cases in which, by a combination of circumstances, large sums were quickly and quite unexpectedly made by certain 'liners' who had got hold of information which their fellows had missed. An inquest was held in the East of London in regard to what was supposed to be merely a common suicide, but after an hour's evidence facts were revealed which showed that a mysterious

murder had been committed. Only one 'liner' was present, and the inquest lasted ten days, during which time the six daily papers then existing took the whole of his copy, amounting to from two to four columns per diem. At the end of the inquiry he received close upon 100*l.* from the six newspapers. In another instance, in which three 'liners' combined to report a railway accident inquest of great importance, each man received 15*l.* from each of the six journals. Again, a good police case in a suburban court worked by a 'liner' has been known to produce 30*l.*; and it often happens that a single fire on a dull night—that is, a night on which there is a lack of news—yields to the 'liner' from 10*l.* to 20*l.* It may be asked, in relation to these cases, how it is that, after the first day, other 'liners' did not enter into competition with those who had been first in the field? The reason is that it is a sort of unwritten law amongst sub-editors that whoever sends in the first part of a report has his contributions accepted to the end, or while there is 'copy' in the affair. It must be also understood that by a process called 'manifolding' the 'liner' can make six or eight copies of his paragraph or report at the one writing, and he is therefore enabled to have his 'copy' in the various newspaper offices with the least possible delay. The 'liner's' working materials consist of a bundle of sheets of 'flimsy,' some 'black paper,' and a 'stylus'—a smoothly rounded off ivory, steel, or agate point—with which he writes; and, as the 'black' is apt to part with some of its surface, and the flimsy is rather greasy, it is no wonder that during working hours the face of the industrious 'liner' is smutty, and that, as Dickens says, he is 'not very neat about the cuffs.' But though Fortune occasionally smiles in that way on the 'liner,' his income is very uncertain. Want of space is his chief enemy. Pressure of political speeches, or war news, or advertisements may, any night, absorb the whole available space of a newspaper; and then the copy of the 'liner' is rejected for want of room, or 'cut down' to such small dimensions that his day's work may return him not two or three pounds, but only a few shillings. Anyone who has ever filled the sub-editor's chair on a daily paper well knows with what a pang of conscience the carefully written flimsy of some well-known and trusted, but humble and needy, 'liner' is consigned to the waste-paper basket.

That the 'liner' is a man not only of resource and industry, but of verbosity, must be obvious. As his remuneration depends

on the amount of his copy which is inserted, he generally writes about five times, or even ten times, as much as is ever printed. His powers of amplification are, indeed, enormous. Whatever may be said of him, he cannot be accused of not dragging in every petty detail of the murder, fire, suicide, or burglary which is the subject of his paragraph or report. With him terseness is a crime, and the maxim that 'brevity is the soul of wit' is line-killing and penny-destroying. 'He has gone to that bourn from whence no traveller returns,' instead of 'he died,' 'terrific conflagration' for 'bad fire,' or 'desperate struggle' for 'fight' will often 'turn' a line, and therefore bring in an additional penny or twopence. Among the literary curiosities of a daily paper with which I was once connected is a report from an amateur journalist ambitious of being a 'liner,' with the bill for his services. He thought that payment was made not on the printed line, but on the written line. He therefore wrote his 'copy' on narrow slips of paper, and in a hand just a shade smaller than the name over a shop door; then counted the lines carefully, and demanded payment at a penny a line for his manuscript!

It is to the liner we owe such 'purple patches' as 'the devouring element,' 'the watery grave,' 'no motive can be ascribed for the rash act,' 'the neighbouring religious edifices,' which were always 'brought into prominent relief by the flames,' and the 'neighbourhood' which used to be 'thrown into a state of the utmost consternation,' 'the vital spark,' which was always fleeing, and the 'lurid flames shot up and licked the doomed edifice with malignant glee.' These loud-sounding words and phrases are now ruthlessly suppressed by the blue pencil of the sub-editor. Yet, owing to the bad example of the 'liner,' the people that 'partake of refreshment,' instead of eating and drinking, and the young lady of 'prepossessing appearance,' but—the liner is always great with his 'buts'—'fashionably attired'—never 'dressed'—still live in the columns of the daily press. Occasionally the 'liner' produces a gem of unconscious humour. A report of the murder of a man named Ducan once came under my notice in a sub-editor's room. 'The murderer,' wrote the 'liner,' 'was evidently in quest of money, but, luckily, Mr. Ducan had deposited all his funds in the bank the day before, so that he lost nothing but his life.' Another 'liner,' describing a street accident, wrote, 'The unfortunate victim was taken to Guy's Hospital, where he now lies, progressing favourably, although he is sedulously

attended by Dr. J. R. Robertson, the resident surgeon, and some of the leading members of the medical staff.' What he meant to convey was that, though the man had been so dreadfully injured as to require the services of several doctors, he was progressing towards recovery. I have also seen this in a report in a Glasgow newspaper of a shipwreck off the coast of Ayr: 'The captain swam ashore, and succeeded in also saving the life of his wife. She was insured in the Northern Marine Insurance Co. for 5,000*l.*, and carried a full cargo of cement.'

The 'liner,' it will be seen, revels in 'appalling disasters.' He is out of spirits and his pockets are empty in the piping times of peace when even an assault on a policeman is of rare occurrence. But a strange suicide, a mysterious murder, a fatal fire, or a sensational burglary makes a new man of him, and convinces him that really, after all, life is worth living. There is a grisly story of a 'liner' who had not had material for a paragraph for weeks. People persisted in not murdering anyone; they would not even commit suicide or drop down dead; fires would not burst out; and the burglar and pickpocket had evidently temporarily given up business. He lived in a cheap suburb, and one afternoon was walking dolefully in his scrap of back garden, smoking his pipe and racking his brains to find out where the next week's dinners for his wife and children were to come from, when he suddenly heard screams proceeding from adjoining premises. He dropped his pipe and rushed out, but soon returned. 'Mary! Mary!' he cried to his long-suffering partner, 'fetch my hat. Thank God! a woman a few doors up has cut her three children's throats, and we shall have a good dinner on Sunday!' A double murder will pay his quarter's rent; and a romantic suicide in high life will give him a pleasant holiday. I know a very successful 'liner' who has a most comfortable home in a London suburb. But his house is suggestive of the Chamber of Horrors at Madame Tussaud's Exhibition, or the Black Museum at Scotland Yard, for almost every piece of furniture in it has associations of a murder, a fire, or a burglary. 'Look at this,' he will say, pointing to his writing table; 'that's a memorial of Dr. Neill Cream, the Lambeth poisoner; and my "lineage" out of the "Southend Murder Mystery" brought me the arm-chair in which you are sitting.' He is very fond of his piano. He owes it to the historic meetings of the Irish Parliamentary Party in Room 15. A fine landscape in oils is associated with the crash of the Liberator Building Society; and

his handsome illustrated edition of the poets has been bought out of his earnings in connection with the burning of a big warehouse in the City. They are to him what his scalps are to an Indian brave—signal proofs of his success as a 'liner.'

Formerly, in those dreary intervals in which there was nothing stirring in police or coroners' courts, the most needy and the most reckless 'liners' succumbed to the temptation of inventing news, or of building it up on the flimsiest foundations. Late at night, shortly before the hour of going to press, a report of a sensational murder, or fire, or accident, would arrive at the office of a newspaper, and, as it was too late to have it authoritatively verified, and as it was too important a piece of news to hold over—especially as the other journals were certain to have it also—it would be published on chance. A few days afterwards—for our grandfathers in journalism moved very slowly—a denial of the bogus report might appear, or it might not; for, again, our grandfathers were in those matters strangely careless and indifferent. In any event the 'liner' was certain to have some plausible explanation—such as that he had got the intelligence from a trustworthy police officer—and he would be able to gather in the resultant pennies. There is a story told that a hard-up 'liner' once wrote a graphic and sensational account of his own suicide, which was duly published, and then he coolly went round the next day and collected the 'lineage,' which amounted to a pretty fair sum.

Some years ago, before the labour question assumed its present importance, a band of Fleet Street 'liners' created a bogus political agitation. They worked in the most systematic and ingenious fashion. Assembling in some favourite hostelry in the courts off the great newspaper thoroughfare, and giving themselves a high-sounding name as a political association—such as the 'Labour League,' the 'Republican Association,' or the 'Tory Working Men's Society'—they made stirring speeches and passed significant resolutions on the burning political topics of the day. Reports of the meetings were sent to the morning papers, which, while the game was new, were invariably inserted, and, what is more, leader writers saw in them 'the drift of public opinion.' Copies of the resolutions were also forwarded to leading members of the Government and Opposition. Such of the acknowledgments of the resolutions as were not purely formal were also sent round to all the newspapers. Finally, any autograph replies received were disposed of to some dealer in autographs. Thus

there was a triple profit on the transaction—first, the report of the meeting; next, the politicians' replies (both of which were paid for by the newspapers that published them at the rate of a penny or three-halfpence a line); and lastly the sale of the autographs. This enterprising coterie of 'liners,' who displayed much ability and resource in the disguises they assumed for the purposes of their political meetings—being Conservative one night, Liberal the next, Republican another night—and the ruses they employed to make their fishing letters effective, repeatedly practised their arts with success on all the newspapers and on almost every man of light and leading in the political movements of the time, until the dodge was discovered. But nowadays a trick of that kind is very infrequent. If it were attempted on any journal no more 'copy' from the offending 'liner' would be received; and if it were successful—if the report appeared in print—the 'liner' might find himself in the dock on a charge of fraud, or at least he would be denied the 'lineage.'

There is one amusing phase of 'lining' in vogue in London during the Parliamentary recess. It consists in obtaining expressions of opinion, through the post, from eminent politicians or other public men on vexed points of current politics or other matters of widespread interest.

Newspaper readers must often notice in the Press letters from men eminent in politics, science, art, and literature, in reply to anonymous correspondents. Our leading politicians figure in these communications most frequently. We read that Lord Salisbury, or Mr. Balfour, or Lord Rosebery, or the Duke of Argyll, or the Duke of Devonshire, as the case may be, has written a letter, in reply to a 'correspondent' who called his attention to a statement made in some speech, or letter, or newspaper, and requested his views on the subject. 'A correspondent' is, in almost every instance, a journalist, whose sole object in ascertaining the opinions of our leading politicians on current events in this manner is to turn an honest penny.

A 'liner' sits down, and assuming the rôle of an ardent Radical, we will say, for the sake of illustration, writes an epistle, something like the following, to, say, Lord Kimberley, Lord Rosebery, or Sir William Harcourt :—

HONOURED SIR,—I am an humble working man. I am a Liberal and a Home Ruler. Imagine, then, my surprise and indignation to read in my Sunday paper a speech made by Mr. Balfour, in which he declares that you, &c. &c.

The reader will guess the nature of what follows. The letter concludes with a request to the great man to whom it is addressed to send the writer a reply, and ease his mind on this important topic, at the earliest moment. He gets an answer to his letter in two cases out of three, and forthwith despatches copies of it, with a few introductory lines of an explanatory nature, to a large number of newspapers. A dozen copies of the letter are, as I have shown, easily made in one writing with the aid of 'fimsies' and 'black' and a stylus. If the reply of the leading politician is of interest or importance; if it deals with a phase of the political question occupying the public mind at the moment, it is pretty certain to be published by all the newspapers to which it is sent. The general rate of pay for matter of the kind is three-halfpence per line. Some newspapers pay only a penny a line, or 2s. 6d. or 3s. 6d. for the paragraph; but others pay 2d. a line, or give 5s. or 6s. for the paragraph. Three-halfpence per line is, however, the average rate of pay, and at that rate our friend, the ingenious and enterprising journalist, often obtains 3l. for the copies of the letter. Of course, if there be little or nothing of interest in the letter, no use is made of it in the newspaper offices, and it is consigned to the waste-paper basket. But the production must be very flat and unimportant to receive that fate. The correspondent rarely fails to get his 'copy' accepted by some newspapers, especially at the season of the year which is known in Press circles as 'the dull season,' 'the big gooseberry season,' or 'the sea serpent season,' when there is little news, and particularly political news, going.

It may be asked, are the newspapers acquainted with the way in which this news is obtained? Of course they are. The views of Lord Salisbury, or Lord Rosebery, or Mr. Balfour, or Mr. John Morley are certain to be of public interest on most subjects; and the newspapers are, as a rule, glad to obtain readable matter from any quarter so long as they know it is trustworthy and accurate.

Here is an example of how the game is played, culled from a recent issue of the 'Westminster Gazette,' which, it will be noticed, suspects the origin of the inquiry:—

Somebody, described as a 'London Unionist'—may be a newspaper man in search of 'copy'—has been calling the Marquis of Salisbury's attention to 'the charges frequently made' (as the 'Daily Telegraph' has it) 'as to alleged collusion between the Conservative party and "Labour" candidates.' Lord Salisbury's

correspondent, it seems, asked whether the responsible leaders of the party would countenance such an alliance, from which, he asserted, the rank and file of the party are absolutely averse.

Lord Salisbury replied as follows:—

Hatfield House, Herts.

DEAR SIR,—I am desired by the Marquis of Salisbury to acknowledge your letter of the 31st, asking him as to 'an alleged compact, or at least a tacit understanding,' between the Conservatives (or Unionists) on the one hand, and on the other hand the clique now known as 'Independent Labour.' In reply I am directed to say that Lord Salisbury has never heard of the existence of any such compact, and believes the allegation to be entirely untrue.

Yours faithfully,

R. T. GUNTON.

But are our public men aware that the correspondent who seeks their views through the post is not a 'faithful follower' or 'an ardent admirer,' as he professes to be, but an enterprising journalist desirous of increasing his income? It is hard to say. A few are undoubtedly aware of the real object of the correspondent. It is a fact well known to politicians and journalists that, during a session of Parliament, a Minister often inspires a follower to ask a question in the House on some particular topic on which the right hon. gentleman desires to make a statement. In this way an opportunity for making a statement, which would not arise in the natural course of events, is created at question time in the House of Commons. In the same way a letter from a Minister often appears in the newspapers, saying his attention had been called to so-and-so by a correspondent, when it is probable he had received no such communication, but is anxious to make it appear he would never have noticed the subject only for the invitation of a third person. It is, therefore, likely that some, at least, of our public men see the journalist behind the correspondent. Indeed, it is probable they would never reply to those communications if they were not well aware the replies would be read in a day or two in the newspapers. A good many of them, however, never suspect the identity of their correspondent; they never see behind 'the humble working man' or 'the Conservative shopkeeper' a grinning 'liner' in a tavern in Fleet Street with a gin or a whisky before him. They would hardly notice some of the communications if they at all suspected their origin. But they are so touched by the fervent expressions of admiration and confidence, or by the earnestly expressed desire to arrive at the political truth by this working man—for the guise of an honest

son of toil is very popular with our enterprising journalist—that they sit down and indite a most interesting letter; and it is only when they open their newspapers, a morning or two after at breakfast, and see the outpourings of their soul in cold print, that the scales fall from their eyes and they know they have been ‘drawn.’

Sometimes, indeed, our enterprising friend receives curt replies to his communications, but he makes ‘copy,’ and ‘good copy’ too, out of them all the same. For instance, the following paragraph was published extensively a few years back:—

Sir Charles Dilke, M.P., speaking at a dinner at Coleford, Forest of Dean, on Thursday last, is reported to have said that the Foreign Office was about to abandon the policy of continuity in its dealings with foreign nations, and embark on a policy of change which would cause disquietude throughout Europe. A correspondent asked the Foreign Secretary whether the right hon. member for the Forest of Dean was not in error in making the statement attributed to him, and received the following letter in reply from Lord Rosebery’s private secretary:—

‘38 Berkeley Square, W.

‘SIR,—I am desired by Lord Rosebery to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, and to state in reply that he finds it quite sufficient to answer for his own utterances without making himself responsible for those of others.

‘I am, yours obediently,

‘N. WATERFIELD.’

It is not so long ago, again, since ‘a correspondent’ wrote to Mr. Gladstone, enclosing some remarks which Mr. Keir Hardie was alleged to have made in reference to the Liberal party, and he received the following reply, which he at once distributed amongst the newspapers:—

10 Downing Street, Whitehall.

SIR,—I am desired by Mr. Gladstone to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 23rd ult., and, with reference to the remarks of Mr. Keir Hardie to which you refer, Mr. Gladstone wishes me to say that he can hardly suppose those statements really to have been made; but, in any case, he has not time to spend dealing with them.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

H. SHAND.

Lord Randolph Churchill was a favourite mark for these communications. He invariably replied; and his replies were always what ‘the liners’ call ‘spicy.’ He was once asked by a ‘liner’—who wrote in the guise of an ardent Gladstonian—for ‘proof of his recent assertion that Mr. Gladstone has “often” made statements that are incorrect, and, when challenged to make good his assertions, has publicly and fully apologised,’ and sent the following reply:—

SIR,—I am directed by Lord Randolph Churchill to acknowledge the receipt of your letter. In reply to your question his Lordship would advise you to study with care Hansard's 'Debates' for the last two Parliaments, as well as the speeches which Mr. Gladstone made in Midlothian and elsewhere. As it is perfectly evident that you are a person with little or nothing to do, this interesting study will prevent time from hanging too heavily on your hands, and at the same time cannot fail to improve your political knowledge and judgment.

I am, sir, your obediently,
FRANK D. THOMAS.

Then there is the ecclesiastical 'liner'—the man who makes a speciality of supplying Church news. Mr. Charles A. Cooper, in his interesting work 'An Editor's Retrospect,' relates that a 'liner' of this kind was known in the newspaper offices as 'the bishop-maker.' When a See became vacant the 'liner' always sent to the papers, within two or three days, a short paragraph, something like this: 'It is stated that the bishopric of so-and-so will be conferred upon the Very Rev. Canon ——— or the Rev. Dr. ———. The name of the Rev. Mr. ——— is also mentioned in connection with the appointment.' The next day another paragraph would be sent, putting the matter a little stronger, as, 'There is a decided manifestation of feeling in ecclesiastical circles in favour of the choice of' (a clergyman previously named) 'to fill the vacant See.' Lord Palmerston was at that time the great dispenser of ecclesiastical patronage. The popular belief was that he was largely guided in his selections for bishoprics by the Earl of Shaftesbury, and the theory arose that the latter was influenced by the paragraphs in the papers. He thought they represented a real body of opinion, and in this belief he recommended one of the clergymen named.

There are also 'fire specialists'—that is, journalists who make a speciality of describing the big blazes that occasionally occur in the Metropolis—specialists who devote themselves exclusively to the coroners' courts, the police courts, and the law courts; specialists who limit themselves to the collection of legitimate news of marriages, comings of age, balls, and assemblies of the upper ten thousand—a branch of work in which the female 'liner' is now elbowing out the male 'liner,' for editors find a woman can do these festivities much better than a man—specialists in art and literary sales; specialists in sales of landed or house property; and specialists of other classes of work, all of whom, by this system of 'lining,' and—no, I will not add 'lying'—manage to live.

MICHAEL MACDONAGH.

LITTLE ANNA MARK.¹

BY S. R. CROCKETT.

CHAPTER XI.

CALEB CLINKABERRY THE QUAKER.

THOUGH to myself the remainder of the night on which Philip Stansfield shot my poor mother remains more or less a blotted and misty dream, yet I have heard so often what happened then told over by others, notably by Umphray Spurway and our old Caleb Clinkaberry, that I know the order of events, as it were, by heart.

My mother lay on the bed to which Caleb had carried her, with her eyes closed, and I stood beside with white rags and liniments in my hands, gasping and swallowing in my throat at the sight of blood, while Caleb with a pair of little scissors cut open my mother's bodice, so that in a little he found the wound in her right shoulder. Then I can recall hearing him murmur to himself (for all the world like a mother over a bairn), 'Mary Digby, my little Mary, that I brought up by the hand ever since Sir Eubule did give you into my care—at Theobald's Inn it was, the hour before he died! An ill chance—an evil star, a heathenish country—and the devil for an husband. Ah, my little Mary, that I who wert thy nurse, should live to see thy heart's blood flow!'

But nevertheless he stanch'd the wound, and having done that which he could, he found my mother, with her senses restored, trying to sit up in her bed, and asking in God's name what was the matter. And a great mercy it was that she minded nothing of the dreadful fact itself, nor yet of the face of her husband at the window.

And in this fashion we two sat all night, I quaking with fear lest the curtains that hid the barred lattice should again be parted or the door below burst open with a clank and the murderer rush upon us with a horrid cry. But Caleb had all safely barred and

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a musket loaded, toward which he looked often to as he went about, muttering and shaking his head.

'For this will I yet stay his career. The bloody and evil man shall not live half his days!'

I must not forget to say that Caleb was a follower of George Fox, being one of the folk called Quakers—only he said but little about it. For they were a people of little esteem in Scotland. Yet now, when Caleb's 'darling maid,' as he called my mother, was touched, lo, he who had preached peace so long turned out as great a man of war as the best of them.

So we sat, and for my part I quaked every time that a rat ran rumbling from garret to cellar, which they did all night, or even a mouse scratched fitfully in the wainscot. Then my mother, growing heated and feverish with her green wound, rambled on about Clieveden and Marlow, with many names and places pleasant-sounding, but to me unknown. And Caleb, as he bent over and put a taste of water mixed with elder-flower wine to her lips, murmured, 'Yes, my pretty, and so thou shalt! To Marlow thou shalt go with old Caleb, and gather water-lilies yellow and water-lilies white!'

'I love the white best,' she said, smiling a little, and looking so young-like out of her eyes, that for the moment she seemed scarce older than I. Nor was she, for my mother had again become Mary Digby, the Squire's little maid, out of Great Marlow, and was pulling flowers in the fair woods of Clieveden as she had done more than twenty years ago.

But of Umphray Spurway no word or sigh or remembrance. I doubt if either of the others ever thought of him all that night, though he had gone out into the dark to face the terrible man who was our bane. But I could see him lying in a forest glade and my father bending over him with the knife I had seen wiped clean on the leaf of Baxter, his 'Saint's Rest,' and that terrible smile on his face. I shuddered as I thought on it.

Yet in spite of all, in spite of the house of the Lodge with its thousand creaking noises, the moan and whimper of the wind in the chimneys, and the brushing sound it made out among the tossing trees, I dozed, waking by starts to find the lamplight falling on Caleb, his unsleeping eyes watching my mother in shadow, turning rapidly to and fro on her bed, and muttering to herself of old days and people of whom I had never heard.

Such scraps as these would come to me as from another world.

'Good Gaffer Noddycap, let me go in here out of the rain. Goody will give me a seat by the hearth till it overpass. And here I declare is young Will Lucy! What can bring him hither at this time of day? How do you do, sir? I am infinitely surprised to see you, sir.'

Then would old Caleb throw out his hand and uplift his eyes to the ceiling.

'God help us!' he muttered, 'she is again all agog on Squire Lucy's Master Will. Dead—dead, these sixteen year. He died fighting the Dutch the year his father sent him to sea because he was growing overfond of our little Mary.'

Again I would doze off, and when I waked it would go something like this: 'I will not marry him. I hate him. Be not cruel! If I must, I must. Mother, do not send me away alone with that man!'

And then for the first time in life there came across me with a jarred and impotent grating pain the gust of a woman's unrestrained weeping. 'I will go—yes, mother, I will go. But oh, I cannot forget him. God in heaven help me!'

And then would Caleb bend over and touch her cheek gently with his fingertips, murmuring little loving tendernesses in her ear, presently turning away with gloomy countenance to mutter great anathemas. 'Accursed—three times accursed shall he be that hath so spoiled our fair vine—our dove that maketh her nest in the sides of the rock. This day is the pride of Caleb Clinkaberry brought low. Ah, the mourning of Rachel, the weeping of Jazer, and the lamentation of Sibmah, clad with vines!'

Then, as the sobbing grew slower, he would turn to the bed, and speaking in a gentle voice would say, 'Sweet Mary, hush thee. The Lord is good. All will yet be well. He will not always chide, neither will He keep His anger for ever!'

And then again would he fall to the cursing of Philip Stansfield as soon as she had fallen into a soothing doze. Caleb spoke ever in a hoarse repressed whisper, but I heard him well enough from the great chair by the dead fire where I sat and nodded, now asleep and now awake.

The very last memory I have of this terrible night of February the twenty-ninth (being leap year) is that of waking to see Caleb Clinkaberry, the palms of his hands pressed together and his eyes lifted up, saying softly, '*Desolation and destruction and famine*

and sword! The fury of the Lord is upon us, the rebuke of our God!'

When I awoke the new day had come, and I was conscious of a ghastly feeling of discomfort and a horror of myself, almost like that which comes with the beginnings of fever. I did not know that this arrives to all who sleep in their clothes for the first time. It was light, and I saw a man by my mother's bedside. A woman was on the other side, both busied with matters that I could not see.

They had not observed me, shrunk up in the corner of the black oaken settle. But at a slight groan from the bed I sprang up and cried, 'Let my mother alone! I will kill you if you lay hand on my mother!'

The man who was stooping over the bed half turned and saw me ready to fly like a bantam cock at him. He did not remove his hands, or disengage himself from what he was doing. But instead he lifted his voice over his shoulder, and said, in a quick rasping tone, 'Umphray Spurway, take this boy away, and keep him away!'

Then I knew that he was the surgeon from Abercain who had come to the Miln House when the plague broke out among the weavers—a skilful but an arrogant man. Then came Umphray Spurway in, looking bleached and grey, the light failed out of his eyes, and the colour faded from his hair and beard—or so at least it seemed to me.

But though I was glad to see him, he pulled me roughly away and railed upon me for crying out at such a moment, being jangled in his speech, and ever with an ear on the door of the room where my mother was.

Then in a little, being come to myself, and the feeling that my clothes were made of hay having a little died away, I would have asked him concerning his bygone night adventures, but he having, as it were, his whole reasonable soul in the further room, bade me hush, and presently gave me a great cuff, whereat I sulked. Also he kept tight hold on my collar as if I were intent to run back again, of which I had no intention.

Then after a while the surgeon came out with a changed and smiling countenance, and said, 'It is out and all is well!' holding up at the same time a little round bullet, at sight of which the great red Englishman turned very white and faint, and cried, 'Take it away, man. God's sake, take it away!'

This I thought strange in a man so brave and strong, whom I had seen adventure upon such a desperate chance that very night.

It was the best part of an hour before they would let me go in to see my mother. The nurse, one Margit Fergus, a wise woman, stood at the bed's head with some liquid in a glass dish, with which she continually moistened my poor mother's lips. The surgeon was gone, of which I was glad. Then I took Umphray Spurway's hand and would have made him come with me, but he would not, shaking me off harshly and striding out of the house with his brows bent and such a look of sadness between his brows as I had never till then seen on any man's countenance.

My dear mother smiled up at me with so sweet and peaceful an expression that I fell to the weeping, not knowing that that is the face which in women denotes the overcoming of suffering.

Margit Fergus would not permit me to bide long, nor to ask any questions; but I kissed my mother's brow, which was chill and damp. So I was glad to go out, and at the door there was waiting for me Umphray Spurway with little Anna Mark in his hand.

'How looked she?' he asked gruffly, without so much as lifting his brows or glancing at me.

'She did very well,' I replied, 'and smiled when I kissed her. She is asleep now.'

He had a paper in his hand and he read it softly over to himself. 'For a green wound a plaister compounded of frankincense, literge, roots of lilies, rose leaves, with the bran of beans ground fine.'

Then he turned to me.

'Boy,' he said, 'hath your mother an herb cupboard or such-like?'

'Nay,' I answered readily, 'but my grandmother hath a fine one at the Great House!'

At this he began to wax uneasy, and kept pulling out his great round silver watch, and looking towards the Miln House.

'If William Bowman comes not soon I will tan his hide for him, great hulking good-for-nothing that he is!'

But the words were hardly out of his mouth when his 'prentice and familiar came up with some twenty of the trained band of weavers. These Umphray Spurway placed about the Lodge House, bidding so many rest in the little coach-house at the back,

where the hens laid in nests of soft twisted bent grass, and the others to stand sentry at equal distances through the wood.

Then he set off by himself at a good round pace to the Great House—as I presumed to get the herbs for my mother's plaister. I ran alongside and asked him if he had killed my father, hoping that he had.

'No,' he said. 'I pursued after him for two hours, and saw nothing. But once I heard him laugh very near me in the darkness.'

'Were you not afraid?' said I, with a certain dogged and perverted pride in so formidable a relative.

'Yes,' he growled, 'I was naturally afraid that I would not find him!'

Then he ordered me back to the Yett House, as he would have ordered a dog. For never was a man more changed than Umphray Spurway about this time. He cared nothing for his looms or his work. Half his men were constantly at our house in the woods, and as for the others—why, they did just what work they wished to do.

And every night till they removed my mother to the Great House and afterwards to Abercairn, Umphray Spurway would take a sword and pistol a little before the hour of dusk and go out into the darkening woods like a hunter who goes on a long hunt.

CHAPTER XII.

THE GREAT ENGLISH DROVING.

BUT of Philip Stansfield, the murderer of his father, the almost assassin of his wife, nor hilt nor hair was seen in all the countryside. Bands of men went, twenty together, scouring the wild places, beating the woods, quartering the muirs with bloodhounds and scent-dogs. All was in vain. Not a footprint, not so much as a shred of clothing on a thorn. Only some few of the searchers would come back whispering under their breath of a mocking laugh which they had heard (or thought they heard). It seemed to hang about the skirts of the party as the night came on and they turned wearily homeward. But it might have been no more than a blinking cue-owl searching for field-mice in the early twilight.

Only those who have known what it is to have a red-hand

murderer at large in their very neighbourhood, can conceive the agony of fear that seized on the whole country-side. Umphray Spurway was the one man who kept his head, and even he shrank into himself, his fine robust body waxing thin, and his rosy cheeks falling slack and wrinkled.

It was curious that, though the cause of all this panic was the man who gave me being, I felt no interest in the affair, save that I hoped they would soon catch and hang him. But I enjoyed the mounting of the guards, the pass-words, the glancing musket-barrels of the brave weavers, the red coats of the soldiers whom the Government sent from Edinburgh to seize the murderer.

Every morning a new tale ran from lip to lip. Every evening a fresh alarm circulated from gable window to gable window. Women shrieked and fainted. Several children appeared untimeously in the world. A carrier was found clubbed, his cart and pockets rifled on the Edinburgh high road, within a mile of the city lights. Every family in the country put up fresh bolts and bars. Poor folk barricaded their doors with heavy furniture, and filled up their windows at nightfall with slabs of whinstone from the nearest rock-face.

At last they took my mother away in a litter, borne on the shoulders of men all the fifteen miles of the plain road to the town of Abercairn, where there was an hospital equipped with physicians of great skill. I was not permitted to go with the party, which in the first instance consisted of Umphray Spurway's weavers, with himself walking on one side of the litter and Caleb Clinkaberry on the other. The old Quaker refused to be separated from his 'little maid' even for a moment, and so fierce were his denunciations of woe and desolation upon all who withstood him, that he gained his point.

So I was left at the Miln House with little Anna Mark, under the governance of William Bowman, which was just as good as none at all.

And then it was that I first knew how much pleasanter it is to be friends with a girl than with a boy. Never before had I known any save of my own sex. I loved my mother in the way in which all boys love their mothers—that is, I made her a very poor and perfunctory return for all the wealth of love she had wearied on me during my years of infancy. Nevertheless I loved her.

Besides her I had never seen any good in womankind. I was

fond of Umphray Spurway, and on this point I shared his prejudices. For save my mother (who of course did not count, being my mother), the Yorkshireman would never consent to have one of the breed within the Miln House. He had perforce to employ them in the fine work of the mill, but ever under protest. They were his bane, the ill drop in his cup, the fly in his ointment—with other things that I mind not now. He had a full stock of odious comparatives for them.

But, as to little Anna Mark, in short while I had proved to myself that she was a very different story. For one thing even Umphray Spurway thought her different. For he, who admitted none of her sex, had taken Anna into his house. Then, again, I liked to play with her and to walk hand-in-hand with her. I never did this willingly or unwillingly with my grandmother, who was wont to extract a catechism out of her pocket and set me to learn proofs of doctrines if she found me idle. Now Anna Mark was guiltless even of 'Man's Chief End,' and as to the scriptural proofs of that noblest of all summations of human destiny: 'Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him for ever'—why, little Anna simply did not know that the thing required to be proven.

I wonder if I can convey any idea of what little Anna Mark was then, when I first knew her in the mill-house by the Esk Water.

'The Witch-Child,' the ill-affected called her, and indeed there was always something not quite of this world about her. She had a far-off look of her gipsy father, Saul Mark, nothing whatever of her mother except her dazzling teeth. All else was her own—no child in the village or among the weaver-lasses at the Miln cottages in the least to be compared to her. She was slender and tall for her age, quick and lithe in every movement as a wild thing of the woods. Her eyes would follow any one with whom she was not well acquainted with the lightning suspicion of a caged squirrel. This shy, wild-wood look afterwards left her, the bright glancing of her eyes never.

Her hair, as I have said, ran in a ripple of brown crisps and curls over her shoulders and down her back. But, even as a child, she had a fashion of her own of packing it on the top of her head out of the way when any childish scheme requiring agility was on hand.

Now, I, Philip Stansfield the younger, thought well of myself then as now. Whatever I did I tried hard to do better than any

one else. And yet I admit that there was nothing, running, climbing, jumping, standing on one's head, on one's hands, making faces, fighting with fists, shooting at a mark with the bow and arrow, playing at quoits, tops, marbles, tic-tac-toe, jacks, knuckle-bones—it was all the same; I might be good at them—but Anna Mark was better.

For a while I had the better in learning, but day by day she overhauled me, spurred on with the ambition of beating me. The 'Books of the Old and New Testaments' were a stronghold for a long while, because she did not see the necessity for getting them by heart. But one morning she puzzled me with Ecclesiastes, and then when she went on to offer the books of the Apocrypha, either forth or back just as I liked, I rose in wrath and called her a Papist, which was the direst term of reproach known to me.

'Papist or no,' she answered back, 'I can beat you at the books of the Bible.'

I did not care, of course, even if the allegation had been true.

For a boy, being manifestly superior in all points to a girl does not need to make good his superiority in particular instances.

I had, however, one stronghold that could not be assailed. Anna Mark could not throw a stone as well as I—this not for want of trying. I remember that once I came on her weeping at a dyke-back, and upon my asking what the matter was, she sobbed out, 'I have tried to throw stones like you, till my arm is near broke with trying—and I cannot do it a bit better!'

'Never mind,' I said, as kindly as I could, for I hated to see her cry, 'we will try a race to the end of the mill-lade, and you can beat me at that!'

'I don't care for running. I wanted to beat you at stone-throwing!' she sobbed.

Yet there came a time when I had a surprise sprung upon me. It was on the day when Umphray Spurway brought home his 'winter beasts.' These were rough and shaggy Highland cattle from the great droves, which with an army of retainers passed every year southward into England. They went south mostly about the end of harvest, whether the year were early or late. The lowland farmers bought them, fattened them on the aftermath of the hay, and on the stubbles of the corn—presently turning them out on the moors till the snow came, and then

killing, salting, and setting them apart as 'marts' for winter consumpt.

Umphray Spurway bought many of these, for being an Englishman he loved flesh-meat, and believed that his weaver-folk worked better on it than on porridge three times a day.

So this buying of the 'mart' cattle was a great event with us, and as my mother, though recovered of her wound, and now lodging in her own hired house in Abercairn, was still weak, I remained (to my joy) at the Miln House. I had looked forward to the English Droving as one great opportunity of proving my superiority to little Anna Mark. And to this day I can remember the shame merging into a kind of reluctant admiration mingled with hopelessness with which I viewed her performances. For some months, indeed, she had made frequent absences from home during the afternoons, and this without giving any explanation of where she had been, though I pleaded hard to know.

Upon the great day we went out as soon as it was light, to choose and bring home our bunch of wild rebellious Highland cattle. It was to the 'Tinklers' Slap' that we went, a wild place among the hills to the west, through which the drove road picked a perilous passage, and Umphray took with him a score of his armed weavers. For he carried money, and the cattle dealers were quite as wild as the cattle they brought with them. At least it was as well to err on the safe side.

We marched merrily and fast, yet not so fast but that Anna and I played about the company, running round and round them, like the collie dogs themselves, gripping, grappling, and rolling over each other, just as they did, while Umphray watched us indulgently and yet carefully, lest I should hurt the girl.

So little did he know! He ought rather to have been careful that she did me no harm. For a greater little tiger-cat never was.

And now I come to my surprise.

For as Umphray Spurway, with his hand on his pistol hilt chose out, and paid for each wild steer or fleck-mouthed bull, it was the duty of his party to meet the beast as it was scourged from the drove by the half-naked kerns of the hills who swarmed all around. Then having put a distance between the chosen and his companions, the aim of us all was to head him away to the eastward, so that he might not double and rejoin the herd by speed of foot. This was usually accomplished by

stones and goads, the men using goads and the light infantry pebbles.

It was wild work at times, indeed at most times.

For the Tinklers' Slap is a deep defile which leads into the heart of the hills. High above the heather bends its black brows to look over. Bell-heather and bent delicately diversify the middle slopes. All the bottom is smooth and green, save where, in a tunnel of bracken and Queen-of-the-Meadow, a certain trickle of a streamlet gurgles and lisps in an emerant gloom.

But upon this noble morning of late September the Tinklers' Slap looked not thus, still and lovely, with only an eagle soaring above it lost in the sky. Down it surged a vast horn-tossing herd of cattle with their noses in the air. All red and black they were, like the ragged tartans of many of the drivers. (For these were of the broken clans, and mostly MacGregors—though some of them called themselves Campbell, who were the worst of all.)

This parti-coloured tide flowed down the bottom of the glen like a river in full flood. Only in the little eddy of Hunter's Tryst near the bottom, where Umphray Spurway waited, was there a sort of backwater. Into this the drover swept a score or two of cattle at a time, some of which Umphray Spurway approved. At other times he would have none of them, but pointed out a beast in the throng as it surged thundering past. Whereat one of the men on little shaggy ponies would plunge, at danger of life and limb, into the tumult of the tide-race and guide the animal out, and so bring it, bellowing with rage and fear, to the appointed stance.

It was strange to observe at the summit of the Slap directly above us, the cattle appearing like a forest of branching horns, standing a moment to overlook the valley with heads up and eyes dilated, and then urged by those behind, surging forward again, while the noise of their mighty roaring came to us in the little vale of the Hunter's Tryst, like the triumphing of an angry sea that has broken bars and doors.

It was the first time I had seen the great English Drowing, and a fine sight it was for man or boy to see.

Anna Mark and I ran forward to be ready to receive the first 'mart.' Anna had been given a stout-pointed 'kent' or oaken staff to use as a goad. With this and her native agility she completely outran me. But little I cared for that, for was not the stone-throwing at hand? As I ran I did not observe that Anna had a bag of pebbles fastened to her waist even as I had myself.

She kept close to Saunders MacMillan, a big herd from the rough mountains, whom Umphray employed to watch the sheep he pastured on the easterly hills, according to his agreement with Sir James, my grandfather, when he came first to the country.

The first beast is always the worst to put on the home road. For he has as yet no companions and he turns and twists, doubles and trebles, with feints and stratagems, as well as straight charges tail up and horns down. As ill-luck would have it he came straight at me.

'Out of the way, boy!' cried Umphray Spurway, whose eyes were everywhere. But I wanted to distinguish myself, and stood straight in the beast's way as he dodged to get back to the herd. The bull came head down, and just as I was firing a round pebble at his forehead, down I tripped over a stone. I felt hot breath blow upon me, and looked to be trampled to death. But though at the gallop he almost missed me, one cloot alone grazing the calf of my leg, and, as it happened, turning it many colours in a day or two.

There was now no one between the brute and the herd, and the Highland kerns had already set up a triumphant yell at our stupidity.

But in the critical moment, there in front flickered little Anna Mark, a 'kent' shortened in her hand. One blow across the nose! He swerved. A poke in the shoulder! He turned. Anna dropped the kent, and with her right hand she selected a stone from the wallet at her waist, and with a sharp 'clip' jerked it from her hip after the manner of shepherds. It flew straight, and took the 'mart' on the ear. Another and yet another, each as truly aimed, succeeded. The beast turned no more but with Anna behind it, and Saunders MacMillan and half a dozen weavers in chase, took a straight line through the little green hope of the Tryst for the vale of Moreham.

Then, indeed, there was a noise to speak about, and I, sitting up dazed and stupefied, heard the Highlandmen shouting to Umphray Spurway: 'Who is the lassie?'

'The lassie?' shouted another contemptuously, as he dressed the herd on the left flank. 'Yon's nae lassie! Yon's a kiltie lad—a son o' Donald Oig's, I'm thinkin', by his lang legs!'

For little Anna Mark's high-kilted petticoats had misled him, and indeed not without some reason. For her hair was tied in a red kerchief after a manner that she had doubtless learned from

her father, and for the rest she was dressed much like one of their limber he-slips who scampered and climbed and yelled alongside the drove.

This was a great blow to me, and it was an hour or two before I could make any headway to get over it.

It was not jealousy so much as that she had not told me what she was doing, but had gone secretly to that great lout Saunders MacMillan, as coarse and clumpersome a lump as any of that name. And in Galloway that is saying no little.

'I wanted to surprise you—that is why I did not tell you!' she said afterwards, as she ran alongside, when once the homeward column was in good going order, and out of the disturbance caused by the routing of the herd.

I said nothing. I was not yet ready to make up.

'Of course,' she said softly (for she could speak very gently when it liked her, which was not often), 'I cannot throw as far as you, nor flourish my arm about over my head. It is not the same thing.'

'You hit the beast and turned it, after it had knocked me over!' I replied gloomily.

'But look,' she cried, 'I can miss as well!' she persisted.

'Let me see then!' said I.

A bullock at this moment turned and tried a last bolt.

'Turn him—turn him, witch wean!' cried Bowie Fleemister, the only Moreham man in the company, and a man who, having lassie bairns of his own, hated Anna Mark's favour with his employer.

Then the girl, with her eyes full on the charging bullock, 'henched' a pebble, which indeed missed the animal, but by strange chance took Bowie Fleemister on the elbow joint!

'Ye hae broke my funny-bane, ye flichtersome wisp o' brimstane,' he cried, dancing to and fro, and nursing his elbow in the palm of his other hand. 'I'll hae ye discerned by the Session for a manifest witch, as your mither was afore ye!'

'You see, now!' said Anna, calmly with her eyes cast down. 'I can miss. I missed the bullock by as much as twenty yards!'

Yet somehow the instance was to me not wholly convincing.

Bowie Fleemister made his complaint to Umphray Spurway before the pain had wholly died out of his tingling finger tips.

'Yon ill-set randy has broken my shuttle-aim wi' a stane,' he said truculently. 'I'll never work mair a' my days! I want her

banished out o' the country like her mither. There will never be peace in the mill till she be gane !'

'O yes, there will !' retorted Umphray Spurway, significantly, riding a little nearer to Bowie, who shrank away from him. Then bending a little from his horse and clenching his bare fist, the miln-master held it to Bowie's nostrils. 'Yes,' he added, 'there will be peace in Umphray Spurway's mill, as long as that hand wags at the end of this good right arm !'

And Bowie Fleemister, the colour of tow, shrank still further between his own shoulders.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE NEW DOMINIE.

BUT there was a sweeter winsomer side to little Anna Mark than this. Where she got it from I know not—from her Maker, I expect. Nor, though I have known her all the years that have come and gone since those days in Umphray Spurway's mill-house, have I ever troubled my head on the subject.

Anna could not be called a very pretty child, perhaps. Her face was always browned by the sun, and till she was well into her teens an even tint of freckles was spread over her brow and cheeks, reaching well up on her brow and down behind her ears.

But no man could pass her on the road without turning to look. Most women also, if only to say 'There is something not canny about that lassie-bairn !' But when Anna looked directly at you, it seemed that you saw a spark of fire kindled far down in her eyes. And when she smiled, why, it was suddenly summer outside and a blue day. The herds on the hills would wait hours to have her company up the lonesome glens and out on the great flowes of heather. The grimy smiths in the 'smiddy' in the villages, hammering at their horse 'cackars,' would drop rasp and pincers and run to the door at the words, 'Here comes Anna !' And long after she was past they could be seen looking out after her, sheltering their eyes underneath grimy palms as she tripped up the street with Umphray Spurway.

But mothers, jealous for their own children, would call them in ostentatiously, lest they also should be enamoured with the fascination of the witch-bairn's spell. Every douce well-born

lassie in Moreham and New Milns was forbidden to play with little Anna Mark, and also encouraged to call names after her to keep her mindful of her condition. Usually, however, they only tried this last once. Then on the following day their mothers would come in deputation to Umphray Spurway, praying him to send the little wild cat away.

But the Englishman, caring no more for women than for the idle clashes of the villages, drove them out of his presence without more ceremony than if his mill gates had been invaded by a tail-wagging, loud-clacking flock of geese from off the common.

She had cast a glamour over him. That was evident. And the gossips took council together to rid him of this spell and themselves of a pest and possible rival of their own growing daughters.

I had begged so hard to be allowed to stay with Umphray, and the Englishman had used such arguments to my mother to make her consent, that I was allowed to bide through the week at the mill-house. But on Saturdays Umphray himself took me down the water to my mother's house in the town of Abercairn, where I stayed till Monday, on which morning Caleb Clinkaberry conveyed me back half-way to the place called Hill o' the Cock, where William Bowman met us and relieved him of his charge.

When Umphray Spurway took me to my mother's he never stayed long, sitting only to drink a cup of tea, and make his compliments on how well she was looking, his eyes mostly upon the floor the while, uplifted to my mother only when she was ordering the tea bowls with her back to us or spooning the black China herb into the bottom of each.

I remember once saying to my mother, 'Why does Umphray never look at you? Is he angry with you, or are you angry with him?'

Her cheek paled and then flushed again. I knew I was hurting her, and yet I kept on.

'I do not know whether he is angry with me,' she replied. 'I am not angry with him!'

And immediately she sent me forth to play on the quay with the town lads of my own age. For she had a notion that I might grow maidenish by associating with little Anna Mark! How far this was from the truth I have already indicated in this history.

I fought a good fight behind the butcher's sheds with Allan Kemp, Mr. Smalltrash's 'prentice, and beat him by dodging blows as Anna Mark did mine, and then, in the nick of time, planting my left on the point of his chin after a feint at his breast, a thing I had learnt the trick of from her.

But when I was in Abercairn my mother thought that such ploys made me manly, and took no notice when I came home marked on Saturday night, though she did not let me wander far on the Sabbath days—except to visit at the minister's, Mr. Nicol Aitkin—with whose son Jock I have fought as many as seven rounds during the time of service in the windowless corner by the side of the vestry, while his father was developing overhead his Seventhy in the application of the Gospel of Peace to the Christian Home.

So, unlike many Scottish bairns, I ever appreciated and enjoyed my Sabbath privileges—and specially the place where it was my lot to sit in the Kirk.

And now I come to that which sent me finally and without reprieve to the Grammar-school of Abercairn.

My Uncle John, the falcon-beaked Edinburgh lawyer, had for a little taken it sorely to heart, that, his precious instrument being only of effect in case of my father's death, he had no control over me or over the estate. The latter, however, he managed in some sort to retain as well as the power at the Great House, by a well-devised system of subservience to the will of my grandmother, the dowager Lady Stansfield.

This, as he was not a man to squander, my uncle was permitted to retain by Umphray Spurway and John Bell, though they informed him that he must in no case consider himself as my *curator bonis*.

It happened that about this time when I was shooting up into a great lump of a lad, and Anna Mark growing ever lighter, straighter, winsomer, that the old dominie of Moreham died one bitter March day. He was observed to lean long against the wall of his little school, but as that was his ordinary in the act of prayer, none took any notice till he had been more than an hour in that posture. Then, one John Dallas, a smith, went and clapped him kindly on the shoulder to tell him that the bairns were waiting for their Scripture. But he found the old man dead on his feet with his forehead against the cold whinstone of the gable-end.

It became necessary to fill his place, and as Mr. John

Stansfield was now so forward in matters of the kirk, and so great with my grandmother and Mr. Bell also, it chanced that the choosing of who should succeed the dead man was left in his hands. And late one night he brought one out from Edinburgh to be the new dominie.

He was a man far beneath the country standard of height, and as he stood at the master's desk, a small lean swarthy man, his eyes very close together, and his hands corded and hairy on the backs, he looked quite unable to cope with the urchins of the ordinary classes, and when the folk remembered the burly plough lads and young fighting cocks of farmers' sons who would be there in the winter, they smiled with significance, and said, 'God help him!'

But in the meanwhile he did well enough. Bernard Ringrose was his name, and he entered on all the offices and emoluments of the old dominie without opposition or comment. He had store of Latin that was above cavil, and to a 'humanity man,' as he was called, the folk of a Scottish parish would forgive almost anything. Mr. Bell had examined the new dominie, it was said, and found him wondrously well equipped. Now this is what happened, as I had long after from Mr. John Bell himself, when he had risen to be regent of the college and a great man.

The minister had a physician's prescription writ by a learned man whom he had known at the college of Edinburgh. It was made out in the English tongue so that the unlearned could understand it, but of late Mr. Bell had found no benefit from using it. So he was sending it with a letter to one Samuel Paterson in the Lawnmarket of Edinburgh, who was the main poticary and herb doctor in the city. With this paper in his hand, the minister one day entered the school of Mr. Ringrose in a kind of maze.

'Dominie Ringrose, I have a sore trouble on me,' he said, 'I am even like Saint Paul. The thorn in the flesh doth sore wound and vex me. What think you of this prescription which the learned Dr. Conradius of Upsala gave me?'

The new dominie took the paper in the shaking hand which made many think him weak—for whenever the weather was moist and warm with a south or west wind his hands were wont to shake so that he could not hold a book to read it aright. At first this was set down to drink, but after, when it was seen what a temperate man was Mr. Bernard Ringrose, it was discovered to

be an intermitting or tertian ague gotten from his life in strange lands. So now his hand shook as he took the paper from Mr. Bell, very careless like, and glanced at it.

'You have not been able to have this made up to your mind, minister?' he said, very high and clear.

'No,' said Mr. Bell; 'seemingly the virtue is gone out of it. I am worse troubled than ever.'

'These are vulgar names, sir,' said the dominie, 'and when such are used, oftentimes commoner growths are foisted on the unwary. Permit me to write the prescription in the Latin tongue, with the proper signs and quantities, and you will find that the virtue will quickly return.'

So he took a pen in hand and wrote rapidly, muttering to himself: 'Instead of tutsane I will write *Agnus Castus*, instead of house-leek, a common misnomer, I will write *Singrene*.'

And so in a trice, with a quick dash of learned signs scattered athwart the paper, he handed the prescription back again to the minister, who was so greatly impressed that if the dominie had told him to eat the paper, it would have benefited him as greatly. At least, when the medicine was brought back from the poticary in Edinburgh, Mr. Bell went everywhere telling of the great skill and prowess of the new dominie in the Latin tongue.

Likewise the people of Moreham need not have troubled about his ability to cope with any offenders in his school. It came speedily to a crisis. Allan Allison it was who refused one day to leave his place, and being a great fellow of well-nigh twenty years, and a known fighter, he told the master to come and take him out of the bench if he wished, and were able. Whereat, without the waste of a word, the dominie made a spring sudden and fierce as that of a cat after a bird. He used no entreaties. He made no apology. He simply flew at Allan Allison's throat, and the next moment Allan was lying on the floor, with the dominie erect above him, his shod heel uplifted above the rebel's face and threatening to stamp the life out of him.

Verily there was order in the school-house of Moreham all the days of Bernard Ringrose, which, however, were not to be many.

For about this time the noise of terrible breakings of houses and bloody murders done upon their owners (it was said by smugglers) ran with a mighty bruit through all Scotland south of the Tay. Strong men went in fear, women shrieked at the cry of a bird, and bairns swarfed, if left alone, just as in the days when Philip Stansfield was first lost in the woods.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE EYES BEHIND THE GAUZE.

THAT which I am now going to tell happened at the November term, when Umphray Spurway, as was his wont, had given permission to most of his folk to go visit their friends where they would, and he himself had gone with a sufficient number to carry to the sea-port of Abercairn all the tweeds and webs of broadcloth he had manufactured during the past six months. He departed on Monday with the first grey light. On the Friday night he was to return with all his money, and one or two of the trustiest lads riding with him in company. The rest, with a month's wage burning a hole in their pockets, abode in the town itself, or tailed off at various change-houses along the way.

In the Miln House abode only Will Bowman, little Anna Mark, and myself. There was no weaving done all that day, and in the great sheds with the huge bolted doors and barricaded windows we three played at 'tig' and 'hi-spy,' and other games to while away, the time. For when his master was absent Will Bowman was every whit as boyish and bairnly as we.

The twilight fell early, bringing a light sifting snow with it, which, however, hardly whitened the roads. It was bitter cold, notwithstanding, and in the Miln House we made up the fires, and in the great weaving sheds also. Will Bowman built up a pile of boughs and roots on the dogs of the firegrate, chiefly that we might see to play, with pleasant crackle and dance of the licking flames. So we raced and shouted, little Anna the wildest and quickest of the three.

But Umphray Spurway delayed his coming, so that it was pretty dark, or rather well into the grey dusk, when we heard the sound of wheels without, and, as it were, the shuffling of feet as of men moving a heavy weight.

Will Bowman ran out, and a voice out of the misty breath at the horses' head bade him open the doors of the mill, for here was a case of fine foreign yarns which Umphray Spurway had sent them from Abercairn to deliver.

'I open the doors at no man's bidding,' said Will, 'till I see my master's hand of write.' Then the leader of the carriers thrust a paper under his nose.

'There, then,' he said, 'if you can read; I can't!'

'Well,' said Will, after considering the paper, 'wait till I get some of the weaver lads to help in with the case!' And so at the word he ran to the back of the house-door and blew three blasts upon the horn. Now it chanced that some of the weavers had slept all day, and were only now arousing themselves to wash and make ready to go again to the change-house. So a dozen or more came drowsily enough at the summons. Then the great doors were unclosed and the huge sheeted package brought in.

It had a foreign appearance, but nothing much out of the common in Umphray Spurway's mill, being done up in sacking, with curious marks stamped upon it in tar or some sticky kind of ink. It was, however, not particularly heavy, for four of the weavers carried it in between them.

'It can sit there till our master returns,' said Will Bowman, eager to get rid of the intruders, for these road carters had no good name.

'Content!' said the chief of the Abercairn carriers; 'then do you give us our discharge, a glass of spirit apiece, and let us be going—for we have far to travel to-night, while you bide safe by the fireside.'

So Will bade the weavers wait till he had written a receipt specifying the marks upon the case. In the meanwhile he ordered Anna to supply a glass of raw country spirit to each of the men, which they took with a muttered salutation. They were tall men, and so soon as the weavers appeared they utterly refused to come within the lighted weaving-shed, urging that they could not leave their horses alone without. So Anna carried the spirit out upon the highway.

In a little while Will Bowman heard the rattle of their horses' feet on the hard-beaten road, and looking out we saw the cart rumbling away into the frost-bitten air of night through a kind of cloud which was the steam of the overheated horses.

The weavers dispersed quickly, mostly to sneak away to the change-houses at the hamlets of New Milns and Moreham, some of the younger to court their joes in byres and barn ends, one or two merely to go back again to sleep.

So we three were left alone in the great Miln House with the newly-arrived packing-case. It stood in the corner across the angle of the weaving-shed with its plain broad side to the blinking fire. Will Bowman replenished the iron dogs with a new load of wood, and we went on with our game. But somehow the spirit

seemed gone out of the hide-and-seek. For ever as we ran and hid, a dodging shadow seemed to our imaginations to run beside us, overleaping the looms and evading the eye, as it were, by a bare inch when we looked over our shoulders. Once Anna, to deceive us, hid in the little dusky triangle behind the packing-case.

We two were going about to find her, for I had already captured Will Bowman, when all of a sudden she gave a wild scream, and came running to us, crying that the case was alive.

‘Nonsense, little one!’ cried out Will, greatly amused. ‘Some yarn is alive enough when it comes here—both with “high-jumpers” and “slowbellies.” But this is the finest Spanish wool, white as milk, fine as a wisp of silk and very expensive.’

But Anna only clutched my arm, and panted, ‘Philip, I heard something move within. I heard it!’

‘Tush!’ said Will Bowman, ‘let us go to supper! Forget it, Anna. You had been running too fast, and you heard your own heart beating. So have I many a time!’

‘Nay, I heard that, too! I was not mistaken,’ she made answer earnestly. And so to convince her, Will got a lanthorn and walking hand in hand with little Anna in the midst, we approached the packing-case, which being set on end towered above my head, though tall Will Bowman could see on to the top of it.

We examined the thing minutely, back and side and front. It was evidently of some light wood and well packed. For when tilted and let down violently on the floor the contents made no noise. Will Bowman tapped it about with a hammer, and found it all of wood on every side, with many bored air-holes, and in front a square of a common yellowish gauze wide-meshed and coarse, covered a larger hole. That was done, Will said, for ventilation, and was common in all their foreign consignments.

After all was carefully gone over, Will bade us hold our breaths and listen. We did so, but save for the stirrings within us and the crackling of the logs on the hearth, all was silent, inanimate, dead.

‘Well, are you content, little woman?’ said Will, patting Anna on the head. But she went out with her face turned over her shoulder, looking back at the thing which had affrighted her.

In the house-place of the private dwelling there was a sense of comfort and safety which even I felt strongly. It was good to be rid of the ugly case in the dusky corner of the weaving-room, yet I could not get little Anna’s shriek out of my mind. It was so sudden, and so unlike her.

'I thought I heard my father whisper,' she explained more than once in an awed voice. 'So I cried out!'

And in spite of the foolishness of it, the saying stuck to me. We had supper—beef cold cut thin on wooden platters, wheaten bread, and plenty of home-brewed ale. That is, Umphray only allowed us one mug apiece when he was at home, and to that we now confined ourselves. Only Will and I treated ourselves to a somewhat larger size in tankards.

So in a little the home-brewed gave me courage, and it came into my head that I was in good case to go alone into the weaving room, where the box stood—to show Anna that I cared nothing about the matter, and that I was as brave as any Will Bowman could be, though he had marched with Umphray Spurway's militia.

So I betook me alone into the great shed, and my spirit revived when I thought what Anna would think of me. The case stood in the corner, still and plain-sheeted like many another that I had seen come to the mills of Umphray Spurway.

I threw some logs on the fire, and stirred the others with my toe so that a bright flame sprang up. More and more I threw on in sheer idleness till I could no longer bear the heat. Then I looked about for something to shield my face, but saw nothing on the mantel-board save some tallow dips and a little cracked hand-glass, before which the mill lasses were wont to order their snoods and part their hair at the hour of noon.

This without thought I took in hand, and held between me and the fire. The pine branches burnt clear and high, and all the great shadowy place of beams and cross-threads, carders and spindles glinted light. The flames danced on the floor and glittered upon the walls, losing themselves among the evasive shadows between the cross-beams and the dusky cobwebby roof.

I felt curiously at ease, and it was with a kind of exaltation that I bethought me of Will in the lighted parlour talking to Anna Mark. I was no more than a boy, as Will often said. Yet I was not afraid to sit there in the dusk, with that great ghostly case staring at my back out of the dusk.

Involuntarily I happened to look at the reflection of it in the hand-mirror. My heart fluttered like a bird which has dreamed itself free, brought suddenly up against the wires of a cage.

I saw, in the strong firelight, the leaping flames gleam red on a pair of eyes that watched me steadily through the coarse yellow gauze on the front of the packing case.

CHAPTER XV.

WILL BOWMAN COUNTS THREE.

THAT I did not scream out as Anna Mark had done when she crouched behind the case, I have always put down to a last wisp of Dutch courage given me by Umphray's small ale. At any rate I only dropped my glass, and stared at the fire hard, trying to think what I should do.

Clearly I must tell Will at once, and yet if I moved away with any haste the thing inside would naturally suspect and spring out upon me. So I continued idly throwing wood on the fire for some time, as it had been to while away the heavy-hanging hours, breaking pieces off dry boughs and tossing them like one careful of his aim.

Presently there was a noise in the parlour, and the voice of William Bowman loud in some argument.

'Coming, Will!' I cried aloud, starting quickly from my seat as if I had heard him call me.

And with my heart in my mouth I went to the door which led within the house, my own dark shadow stalking lengthily before me, uncertain and blurred in the leaping flames of the burning wood. I did not dare even to glance in the direction of the mysterious packing-case. But I shut and bolted the door behind me so soon as I had passed through.

Will Bowman was going up the stairs to bed with his boots in his hand.

'Will,' I whispered, 'Will—we are all dead men. What Anna said is true. There is a murderer in that case.'

Will paused on the second step.

'What do you mean? Have you gone as mad as Anna?' he said, smiling.

But as soon as I had told him of the eyes which had looked at me through the coarse veiling, he came back down the stairs and began to consider, scratching his head and thinking hard, without ever dropping the boots out of his hand.

'The weavers are either away with their master, or over to the change-houses by this time,' he meditated. 'There will not be one sober man in New Milns by this hour of the night. Philip, are you staunch? Can you stand behind me in this? I will

go and outface him now, thief or murderer, or whatever he may be !'

I answered that I would certainly do that which in me lay, though I knew not what he meant to be at.

He was back in a moment with a couple of small swords and a dagger.

'Come on,' he said, 'we will try cold steel on our lurker. A pass or two will do my master's Spanish wool no great harm, while shooting blazing wads into it at that range would set the stuff on fire. And a thing like that would be the end of me with Umphray Spurway !'

So giving me one of the rapiers, Will Bowman took a candle in one hand, and his own small sword in the other. We went into the great silent weaving-shed, where he set the candlestick down on a loom. But, indeed, with all my throwing of fuel on the dogs of the grate, the place was like day, and even the dark corner where the packing-case stood was filled with light.

As we went softly down the floor we heard a light patter of feet behind us, and, lo ! there at the door was little Anna Mark with a pistol in her hand.

'Ah,' she was beginning, 'did I not tell you ? I thought——'

But Will stopped her with a wave of his hand. We stood before the canvas-covered case. It loomed up bigger than ever, looking blank and inanimate enough to have contained a dozen gravestones.

I heard Will suck in a long breath, as he threw back the sword that was in his hand to be ready for the thrust. Then he spoke in a loud voice.

'Now,' he cried, 'we know that there is a man inside this packing-case. We are here fully armed, and are resolved to try the truth of our suspicion. Whoever you may be, I bid you, in my master's name, and the name of the law, to surrender yourself. I will count three, and thereafter thrust the case through and through with my sword. I give you fair warning !'

Then he counted slowly, 'One !'

There was no sign or sound from the packing-case, though we listened intently, and I own that I quaked to my very shoe leather.

'Two !'

Still there was no answer, not a sigh or a quiver, not the stirring of a rat in the wainscot.

'For the last time I warn you, whoever you are !' said Will

Bowman, very grave and slow; 'after I count three I will thrust. And the Lord have mercy on your soul!'

I knew where he had gotten that. He had seen it in the Old Bailey trials, a collection of which was in the house.

Having so spoken, he paused, it might have been five seconds or five hours, I know not.

'Three!' he counted, in a loud sudden shout.

His sword arm darted out, the clean steel jerking forward like an arrow. The thrust appeared to pass right to the back of the case, easily and silently.

Will withdrew the steel with a great gasp of relief.

'There,' he cried, fiercely, 'will that set you at rest? Or are you glad that your cursed imagination should put us all in this fret for nothing. You, Philip, deserve a raw-hiding, or, better, a good cobbing with a barrel-stave over a beam, when Umphray comes home. And, by gad, you shall have it, too.'

He looked angrily about at us as we stood a little way behind him.

'But see,' he cried, 'I will take it on myself to make certain!'

And with a quick hand, and in a sudden characteristic burst of anger, he tore away the rough sacking and yellow gauzy stuff from the blow hole in front. A square of wool, fine and white and clean, was revealed—nothing else.

'Th-there!' he cried, actually stammering in his anger, 'get to bed, both of you, for wretched little croaking blasties! And let me fasten up this case again as best I may.'

He was bending down to pick up the torn sheeting, when, in a clear childish treble, little Anna Mark uttered the words: '*Will, what is that on the point of your sword?*'

William Bowman held his sword up. Lo! the fine point of the rapier was tinged with red for a good three inches. A drop or two had distilled upon the floor.

Instantly Will's face took on the fighting look of his North Riding forefathers. His under jaw shot forward, his forehead seemed to flatten. His eye fell on the case, and, in the midst of the white square of wool, a red spot had appeared at the place from which Will had withdrawn his blade.

'Ah, I have you this time, cowardly murderer!' he cried in a voice like a trumpet.

'Hold, hold, Will! Do not kill him!' I shouted. But I was too late. Will felt with his rapier point for the row of small air-holes which went about the case above the middle, and through

these he sent thrust after thrust, swift as the succession of pulsing lightnings in mid tempest.

Then followed the most appalling cry that it has ever been my lot to listen to. No words came from the recesses of the box, only scream on scream of direst human agony. There were signs of vehement upheaval within. And after rocking violently to and fro, with a mighty crash the packing-case fell face downward upon the floor.

I ran to the door in terror and horror. But William Bowman stood his ground with little Anna Mark beside him. Her face was white, but she passed him the loaded pistol without a word.

Then with the pistol cocked in his hand and levelled at the box, he called to me over his shoulder to run to the change-house and warn all that were there. Then I was to return, beating the weavers' cottages for recruits. Let it not be doubted that I ran my best, snatching the alarm-horn and blowing it as I went. So that in half an hour I was back with a dozen men, all more or less untouched by liquor.

Will Bowman stood where I had left him, with a set look of grim determination on his face. But little Anna was nowhere to be seen. He had ordered her to bed as soon as he began to realise what might appear when the box was opened. Perhaps, also, he remembered her words, 'I thought I heard my father whisper!'

The men slowly turned the packing case up from the blood-stained floor, and stood it face forward as it had been at the first. Then with bars of iron and pickaxes they tore away the boards. Wool was packed tightly at the sides and all around, but as they lifted this away swiftly and fearfully, the arm of a man holding a pistol appeared, still twitching with the last remnants of vitality. Another pull and the face was revealed.

It was that of Bernard Ringrose, the new dominie.

He appeared to be quite dead.

Then I thought, as I went upstairs and found Anna Mark, a little white-clad figure, listening on the stairs, that surely now the end of evil had come, and that the murderous hound who had so long disturbed the peace of Scotland, had at last been taken in his own trap. I knew not that this was only one broken thread in the net of evil which was closing upon us all.

'Go to bed, little Anna!' I said, 'all is well!'

(To be continued.)

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